

Searching for Lightning

by LesserWraith

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Summary: Toothless embarks on a journey to find his mother, but he certainly isn't going alone. Sequel to Immortality. No slash!

1. Names

****Here it is, as requested! Thanks to all of you guys for helping me make this decision!****

* * *

><p>"Ahh!" Hiccup yells, landing with a thump. I follow suit, but in a far more respectable fashion. Thank goodness the ground is sand and not rock.

Hiccup? Are you alright? I ask, looking at the boy sprawled on the ground, his arms spread out from the impact of the fall. Luckily, we didn't fall _that_ far.

"I _was_ alright," he says, getting up slowly and dusting himself. "I think that the reverse flipping needs a little bit more adjusting."

My eyes widen, my ears perk up. _Again?_ I ask, moving my tail up so I can see it.

I uselessly try to re-open the tailfin mechanism, commanding it _open, dammit._ Of course, as it's artificial, it doesn't. I look at Hiccup nervously.

"Let's just try that again-" he begins.

No! I say, glaring at him. _I am_ not_ letting you get hurt like that again!_

He crosses his arms and gives me his sarcastic smile. "And I suppose we should just stay stuck here and live on bark and moss?" he says, gesturing to the forest's entrance.

Seems a lot better than the lobster we had last time, I point out, lightening the mood. He rolls his eyes and unfolds his arms.

"It's not like we're in any danger of starving here, anyway," he says, reaching into his bag and handing me a codfish. I look at it hungrily. "I brought lots of supplies."

Food before next test flight? I ask, my stomach grumbling in agreement.

He rolls his eyes again. "You can just _snatch_ it away from me and I wouldn't even lift I finger," he says. "Instead you beg like a-a-"

Friend, I say, closing my eyes and scratching my wings happily. _Even friends can ask for things too, you know._

I can tell that he's rolling his eyes, again, but I'm far too concerned with the wing scratching to care. I just wish I could scratch my head too. Fortunately, Hiccup likes to do that for me. And, unfortunately, I can't do the same for him. But hey, he can't lick me clean either.

"I don't even," he mutters, stuffing the fish back in his bag and walking towards me. "No fish until you let me fix that tailfin-"

I swipe my tail away from his outstretched arm, growling slightly.

No tailfin fixing until you give me that fish, I say with finality.

A sigh tells me that Hiccup isn't the happiest person on Earth at the moment.

"Whatever, then," he says, handing the fish to me. I croon happily, turning around to let him fix the tailfin.

See? That was easy, I say, smiling happily.

"Persuading you isn't," he says grimly, pulling out a wrench and disassembling the artificial tailfin.

****2 hours before****

"Whoa! Be patient, Toothless!" Hiccup says, holding my tail down as I try to flick it up towards my head. I can already feel the cloth tailfin back!

Can't I just look _at it or something?_ I whine, itching to spread out my wings and fly into the sky with the recently rebuilt contraption.

"No," he says. "Now hold still while Hiccup the Clumsy tends to the damages."

I warble, trying my best to stay put as he puts the darn thing together.

It's been a while since we left Berk and its inhabitants. A whole good three days, actually.

I originally insisted on telling Hiccup that I was leaving alone, despite our previous agreement that stated that we would always be together, but I guess my stubbornness stretches out to more than just myself. He told me that he was coming as well, and that was that.

Although I have to admit, I feel way better with Hiccup on my back, safe and sound, rather than on my own. It just happens to be that the place we're headed to isn't exactly safe nor sound. We're headed towards the long-rumored Isle of Night.

We're going to find my mother. I would go and find his mother, too, but he keeps on saying that his mother's "safe in Valhalla", and "we can't go there". When I asked him where that was, he told me that it was "a place that your mother certainly isn't in". That got me thinking for a while. If this said place is "safe", then why can't we get in, and why could my mother not be in there? She might be anywhere for all I know, but Hiccup planned to search in the mythical Isle of Night first, because it was related to Night Furies in legends. And legends usually have a basis in facts, and then extended into non-factual facts so it looks super awesome and interesting.

Either way, if Hiccup isn't willing to talk about it, I'm not going to pursue the subject. I mean, I could just look into his mind and everything, but that would be rude, especially now that he can sense me doing it. He glared at me when he felt me tapping into his thoughts about Stormfly.

What? I asked, looking at him innocently. _I just want to know more about her._

"More like you want to know if you have competition or not," he said, rolling his eyes.

I widened my eyes, looking at him in shock. _H-how did you know?_ I asked. _Not that I- I suspect you or anything!_

Unfortunately, I did, like I suspect everyone else.

"Being the famously overprotective Night Fury has given you quite a reputation for that kind of thing," he pointed out.

I grumbled, looking at him guiltily. He crossed his arms, rolling his eyes.

Sorry, I muttered. _I just like her a lot, that's all._

"Definitely not just _that_ _all_," he said, and I slumped to the ground in embarrassment.

Alright! I admit it! I said, covering my head with my wings. _I wanted to make sure you didn't like Stormfly!_

He smiled at me like I was the stupidest dragon in the world. And at that moment, I probably was.

"Why would I like a freaking dragon?" he asked, shaking his head. "They're like, four times bigger than me! Besides, I like Astrid, and-"

He paused and stared at me, realizing his mistake. I warbled happily.

I didn't hear anything, I said, getting up and smirking.

"Nor did I," he said, getting up and walking away.

I crooned.

Yeah, so 1. I can't ask him what Valhalla is and 2. He's more concerned about my mother anyway, so I guess I'll have to find her first, and 3. I'll probably force him to look for his mother afterwards. If he knows the place, it won't be so hard, right?

Yeah. Like how I know about the Isle of Night and its inhabitants. Finding it will be _really_ easy.

To be honest, I've only heard of it from Hiccup and the other dragons. Which, with the former alone, basically means everyone.

They say that the Isle of Night is a huge settlement of Night Furies (or, well, Night Furys, if the similarly spelled word "furries" is getting to you), along with other unknown species of dragons. Alright, it isn't exactly a settlement, it's an isle, like Berk, but it just looks cooler sounding that way. They say that it's the 'perfect land', where dragons live in peace and all that stuff, and only because of the Night Furies' intelligence that this paradise could be possible. In fact, there's a song that's related to this mythical place:

We can build the paradise we've been looking for

The El Dorado of dreams and galore

We can tie our loneliness and bloom the flower

Form the Isle of Fury with all its power

I have no idea what El Dorado is, but I guess it means a place of wealth, something that dragons of course don't care about, but the _flower_ in this case means love, and _power_ the ability to accomplish things through the motivational force known as the above. It's a sweet little melody that Hiccup sang to me a few nights ago, which just makes me want to find that place even more. And, knowing that Mother is a Night Fury, she's bound to be thereâ€¦ right?

Hopefully.

So, yeah, this is why we've been kicked out of Berk and why I feel so guilty about all of it. I mean, I don't actually _miss_ Berk, save

for its abundance of fish and Stormfly, but I know that Hiccup is tied to that place. I mean, he was born there and all. And he has a mate there, even if he's denying it with all his worth.

He told me that he didn't really care about leaving Berk much, but I could tell that he misses it a lot. He wants to go home and tuck into his bed, where the sun will always rise and the food will always be at the table, where the people will always be there for him, where he will know that as long as he is there, he will be happy.

So why Hiccup blatantly (and angrily) told me

"Why don't you get it, Toothless?! I'm doing this for you, dammit! Of course I want to go home, of course I want to see Astrid again, but I won't, and I try to make myself not want to, because I want you to find your mother! And I don't want you to go alone!"

when I kept on pestering him about it was not really unobvious at all.

The wonders of that boy. I mean, I care about him a lot, but is it really alright to hurt yourself for others?

I learned that the hard way, in our last big fight, 2 days after he froze his age, unfortunately.

Anyway, with him aging incredibly slow (at, like, my rate of growth), I guess we'll have a lot of time to find Mother then head back to Berk for tea.

And with all that time, he's been preparing for a whole new journey just to put his mind off his homesickness. It's something that also makes me feel guilty, but hey, who doesn't like adventure?

Oh. Maybe Fishlegs.

After we left that cove (Hiccup left a letter for Astrid), we flew off towards one of the outlying islands to take shelter. The good thing about the islands is that they all have caves inside, so you really don't have any idea which one actually has beings living in it, which makes it ideal in the ever unlikely situation that Hiccup's father would want to mount an expedition intent on looking for him/me/us. He probably wants me dead, now that I think of it. I did convince his son to leave Berk, leave his futureâ€¦ for a better one.

No longer would he sleep on the comfy beds of Berk, but no longer would he have to be hurt by those idiots again. But will it be worth it?

Well, that's up to me to do. Whether Hiccup will love this journey or hate it depends on me, my actions, and my bond with him.

****Before the flight****

"So, Toothless, ready to do this?" he asks, going over the tailfin one more time and hitching on to my back.

You bet I do, I say, spreading out my wings and stamping my feet impatiently.

"Then, we're off!" he says, and I burst into the air immediately.

The morning sky is something that I've treasured so much. The sun and its rising flame of light represents so many things in dragon culture. It signifies the beginning of something new, the birth of something mighty and great, the sacrifice that the night gives in order for the sun to give way to greatness, shining its powerful rays of sunshine onto the world, too giving birth to the lesser beings that lay under the mighty solari's flare.

That's probably why Night Furies aren't exactly the most famous types of dragons in the world. We're born at night, in lightning storms, in isolated hills far away from other dragons, and so we live in the night. We're not really energetic at daytime. At night, though, is when we truly show our Fury-

"Whoa! Toothless!" Hiccup yells, snapping me back into reality.

The tailfin's gone or something! I can't control my flight! I say frantically, not sensing the artificial organ in my inner flame. All I can sense now is freefall.

"Dammit!" he swears, moving the gear into the highest opening position as possible. Still, I'm beginning to lose altitude as the fin makes me veer right, spinning my body slowly.

I'll try to land by the sand, alright? I say nervously, firing at a nearby island to mark the place of landing. Little do people know that Night Fury shotblasts can help in the landing of a dragon. Sadly, the flame itself is usually put out upon landing, so it can only help for as far as that.

"Just make it quick," he says, tugging at the rope that controls the mechanism desperately.

I try my best to stall in midair, so we fall directly downwards, but I can glide for only so long before I begin losing height again. When I start to spin again, Hiccup climbs off my back and onto my tail. I roar in surprise.

Get back here! That is suicide! I yell, but Hiccup doesn't answer.

I hear the fidgeting of metal on metal as Hiccup does things to the tailfin. Please work, please work.

Suddenly, I feel the tailfin back in my control again. It seems to be open, but forced. Hiccup must have successfully pulled it open again, allowing me to take control once again.

I spread my wings wide in midair and let the wind below me keep me afloat in the air. I tilt my body down slightly, allowing me into a slow descent towards the sandy ground below.

As said to our intelligence, Night Furies _never_ miss their pinpointed location of landing.

I land on to harmless flames below, but Hiccup isn't so lucky, being

on the tail and all.

****Present****

"I'm nearly done," Hiccup declares. "I'm just going to join this thing tighter so it won't snap again."

That would be great, I say. _I've been in this position for over an hour._

The wind blows slowly on the island. We're on a beach, with a forest right above, a small hill to the top of the island which grabbed my attention to the landmass in the first place. I can't see the water from my position, but I can tell that there are a lot of fish around here.

"Say, Toothless, what's your favourite colour?" Hiccup asks me, still fixing away at the mechanism. I've moved the tail up to my side so I can watch Hiccup fix the thing, but like all things, if you indulge in the same thing too much, you tend to get bored. You need to find new things to do, new feelings to feel, new hopes to hope, stuff like that. But, of course, love usually stays the same. It's what you do _with_ the person you love or care about that makes the relationship interesting.

Favourite colour? I ask, warbling slowly in thought. _Why_?

"It's something that humans think about," he says, hammering at one of the joints. I can only hope that he won't accidentally hammer my real tailfin, because that would hurt a lot.

Favourite color I warble. _I guess it would be brown._

"Brown?" he says, confused. "Of all colors, why _brown?_"

Well I say, crooning, _It's the color of your hair, isn't it?_

Hiccup stops hammering at the mechanism and stares at me.

"Excuse me?" he says, getting up from his crouched position and looking at me full in the eyes.

It's the color of your hair, I repeat, smiling. _What's wrong with that?_

Hiccup gives me a smile back, not really knowing what to answer.

"No wonder why dragons don't usually have favourite colours," he says, touching my snout. I snort.

So, what's yours? I ask curiously.

He sits down and begins hammering at the joint between the sliding cable and the hook again.

He finishes slamming down on the metal works, adding a little knot into the rope for extra measure. He gets up and gives a smile.

"Not telling," he says playfully.

I growl. _Oh, yes you are,_ I say, opening my wings and baring my teeth slightly.

"No way," he says, packing up his equipment back into one of his bags and-

"Ow! Hey!" he says as I nudge him in the side.

C'mon, what is it? I ask. _I told you mine. You have to tell me yours!_

"Aw, c'mon, Toothless!" he says as I repeatedly nudge his side, forcing him to back slowly.

Tell. Me.

Hiccup sighs and winces as I give another nudge.

"Fine," he says, resigning to my pestering. I stop nudging him and sit back on my haunches instead.

What is it? I ask, all ears perking up in anticipation.

"It'sâ€¦ green," he says embarrassedly. "You know, fern green."

Fern green? I ask, looking at him confusedly.

"It'sâ€¦ uhâ€¦ the color of your eyes," he says.

A _really_ long silence passes as I stare at him with both eyes. If I had another eye on each of my ears, they'd all be looking at him with great interest.

Riiight, I say, rolling my eyes. _As if you'd choose the eye color of a_ Night Fury _as your favourite colour._

"Well, I _do_!" he says, glaring at me. "It's just so _you_ and everything!"

I growl. _I was trying to lighten up the mood!_ I say.

Another silence passes as Hiccup's cheeks redden from embarrassment. Again.

"Sorry," he mutters.

No wonder why Astrid doesn't like you, I joke.

His face changes emotions so fast that I swear that I did not see it transit at all.

"_What_ did you say?!" he says, glaring at me.

Oh? You going to do something about it? I say tauntingly.

"Come back here!" he says, running up towards me.

No way! I say, getting back down on all four feet and running

backwards. laughing at Hiccup's futile attempts to catch up.

"Stupid reptile!" he says, panting as the prosthetic weighs him down on the sand. I tease him by stopping, letting him come close enough to pounce on me, and dashing away just as he tries to. No one matches the Night Fury in speed.

Catch me if you can! I call, running up to the water's front and letting him run towards me. _Or can't!_

"I'll make you eat those words for lunch!" he yells, jumping at me with full speed.

I stick out my tongue, but inside I decide to let in on this one, not knowing how far he'd tolerate this without getting fed up.

Unfortunately, due to the elevated areas of the sand, his leap goes far above me. In fact, he's actually _above_ me know, instead of on.

"Aw, great-" Hiccup says, but before he can ponder on the wonders of flying in the air before falling into the water, my tail picks him up and props him safely onto my back. He slumps down there, his back touching my own, his body heaving heavily as he struggles to find air.

"Hahâ€| hahâ€| fine, then, Toothless," he says, panting laboriously. "You win."

Win? Why? I ask confusedly. Seriously, what kind of human would think that stopping would mean losing? It just means that he stops. We aren't even in a competition.

"It'sâ€| hahâ€| well, I couldn't catch you," he says, reaching his arms into the sky and letting some of his body odor waft out. Smells weird to the dragon's nose, as far as I'm concerned. I wonder what dragons would do with body odor. I wonder what _humans_ would do with body odor. "So you win."

I_ certainly wasn't under the impression that we were in a competition,_ I say, crooning softly as he slowly recovers on my scaly (but not odorous) back.

"Well, if you did, you would be up in a tree by now," he mutters. I turn my head to see him properly.

What do you mean? I ask. _I don't get any of this._

"Don't dragons play like this or something?" he asks, lying on my back and watching the clouds pass by above.

Well, the less solitary dragons do, I say. _The Terrors, as you call them, are the most playful of the dragons._

"I see," he says, urging me to continue. It's a mutual kind of feeling we're used to, who knowing what to talk and when.

They don't see it as competition, though, I say. _Usually it just means that they want to have fun, and there aren't any real

agreements or anything. If one side wants it to end, then it usually just stops there, whereas competitions are more strict than that._

"Soâ€¦ you didn't think you won or anything," he summarizes.

No, I say, warbling. _I just think you're fun to play with._

"At my expense, as usual," he mutters.

I look at him with wide eyes. I'm about to apologize to him when he says the following words.

"But that's what made you feel fun, right?" he says, smiling. "Then I don't mind."

I slit my eyes very briefly. _You're having fun too, aren't you?_ I ask.

"Yes," he says. "Well, until I nearly fell into the water. I don't think my prosthetic comes with a set of lifebuoys."

I wait for him to laugh before I do. I _have_ to make sure that he's having fun, you know.

The sun starts to fade into the afternoon as we lay there in the sun, thinking and not thinking. The sum of all actions there are, I guess.

It's a soft, quiet silence. Most silences involve one of the pair thinking about the awkwardness of not talking to the other, and sometimes the guilt of being unable to think of a proper start to a conversation, or fear that any conversations that are started will abruptly and quickly end in awkwardness and that the silence will get even worse. Sometimes it happens to both sides, and they begin pushing each other away. They think of scenarios in which conversations could occur in, but it usually never comes, and the worst thing that could happen would be the other side getting up and bluntly telling the other that they're leaving, which doesn't leave any room for any more talking- at all. It burns them inside, and it's an awkwardness that's truly sad to see. So many friendships have been ruined through this need to talk, but not knowing what to talk.

Some silences are perfect. Both are thinking and not feeling the need to talk, and just sitting there, wondering about things, until one of them thinks about something nice and the conversation starts as if nothing has happened.

This, of course, is what's happening now. Sure, what I usually think of is usually 1. Hiccup, 2. Mother, and 3. Stormfly, but number 1 knows that, and he really doesn't think much about it. So, well, let's just say that conversations are something complicated and take 2 to be perfect.

I mean, thinking too much will definitely give you a headache, no?

Yes.

"Toothless?" Hiccup asks lazily, getting off my back and resting next

to my legs.

Yeah? I ask, crooning softly.

"You said Terrors were what humans called them. Dragons call other dragons differently, right?" he asks.

Yeah, I say. _We all have different names for us._

"What's yours?" he asks curiously.

I frown. I haven't heard my Dragonese name in a long, long, time. I want to forget it, actually, for it holds so many unwanted memories.

Well, I say quietly, _It's **Nox**._

"**Nox**" he says, looking at me keenly. "That sounds cool."

It has a pretty horrible past, though, I say, hoping that he gets the point.

"Oh," he says. "Sorry."

A short silence passes and I decide not to leave him hanging there with this new information and all.

Night Furies are called **Pax Sinistre**, I add, _Meaning_ silent fire_. Well, I guess the **Sinistre **could also mean that we're brutal and everything, but I'm not sure._

"Given your nature, nah," he says, nodding. "What do you call humans, then?"

I give him a long stare, telling him that I don't want to tell him.

He stares right back, his eyes telling me that he wants to know.

And, between his needs and mine, his is far more important.

Asup, I say, my voice barely audible.

"Does it mean something bad?" he asks curiously.

Trash, I say. _It means trash._

He falls silent and looks at me thoughtfully. This is the first time that I've come closest to feeling this awkward.

"I guess it makes sense," he says, "After all we did to you guys."

I feel a fire burning in me, but at the same time, curiosity. Why is he so acceptant of it? Why does he not feel angry that his race is given this name?

As soon as I ask him that, he says, "We sort of deserved it."

How? I ask, ears perking up again.

"Well, let's see..." he says, holding up his fingers and picking them down one by one as he lists the humanoid exploits one by one. "War, murder, hate, discrimination, prejudice," he holds up the other hand, "Ignorance, indecency, dishonesty, selfishness, and the fact that we've been killing dragons for centuries. Doesn't that make you kind of hate humanity?"

I certainly don't hate ****you****_, I say, crooning softly.

"Wellâ€¦| thanks," he says, smiling. "But I guess I could be worse."

You could as bad as you can, I say, _And I'd still care about you._

"Award for the cheekiest dragon goes to you," he says, and I laugh.

Well, to be fair, I say, warbling softly, _We don't refer to_ you_ humans as that. Not the Berkian dragons, anyway. We call you guys by your personal names._

"What, I have an impersonal name?" he asks, confused.

Names that dragons give you are pretty common along with your own given names. Then there's the formal names, and the impolite names, it's pretty complicated. A human can have several names this way, but dragons only have a few.

"Can you tell me mine?" he requests, reaching into his notebook and beginning to write.

Most people would think this as an insult to not giving the listener their full needed attention, but hey, you have to trust the other person that s/he too listening to you.

Let's seeâ€¦| I say, recalling the previous names that dragons have called him.

****_Maldrit_**** _is your impolite name, meaning clumsy._

Hiccup writes that into his notebook with the word CLUMSY in big letters.

****_Chai_**** is your common name, meaning boy. Used with the other boys, too._

Hiccup writes that into his notebook as well.

****_Pax Norte_**** is your given name, used by the dragons. Means Night Rider._

Hiccup underlines this word once.

****_Burneson_**** _is your polite name, meaning integrity.

Hiccup writes this in the smallest font he can.

Andâ€¦| there's a name that only I use to call you, I say.

"Hm?" he asks, looking at me, surprised.

Iâ€| yeah, I say, embarrassed because of this newly confided information. _I never used it to you before, because you wouldn't understand it. It'd be freaky to you, you know._

A hand touches my snout softly.

"It can't be worse than Maldrit, can it?" he asks, smiling.

He removes the hand and continues to smile at me. I can't let him down, can I?

Mikata, I whisper. _It means friend. And a lot more._

He looks at me, not really knowing what to say.

I'm sorry that I kept this thing from you, I say, trying to change the mood. _It sounds lame and I don't want you thinking that I think less of you-_

His tight hug around the neck tells me he thinks otherwise.

"It's the best name in the world," he says, smiling. "Are you seriously thinking that **_Mikata_** sounds lame?"

It's a unique Dragonese vocabulary that no one uses anymore, I say dejectedly.

"That makes you unique for using it, then," he says.

And, as I stare at him, he only continues to smile at me.

T

"Time for our next test flight, now," he says, pulling away from me.

Aww, already? I whine. _I kind of wanted to just lie here and everythingâ€|_

"Yeah," he says, "Me too. But we're not going to find your mom nor lunch if we stay put here all day."

I nod, getting up. _Everything alright then?_ I ask.

"I feel excellent," he says. "Knowing what dragons call me boosts a lot of confidence."

I warble happily as he climbs onto my back.

"So, ready for this?" he says, opening the tailfin wide. I can feel it now, its surging flame acting as if it was part of my own body.

And, with _Mikata_ controlling it, it sort of is.

Yes.

* * *

><p>Well, I guess this isn't adventurey... yet. Fear not, I have a whole map laid out for their journey ahead! More of his past to be seen, too.

I might update every two days from now on, because schoolwork is just so heavy at the moment.

Alright, time for the glossary of words!

Nox- Night or darkness, Latin.

**_Sinistre-_ Fire, French. Rare translation.

>

Maldrit- derived from _Maladroit_, French.

**Chai- ****Thai. Also means coast or edge.**

_Pax-_night, Latin. Also means peace (probably).

Norte- derived from _Norite_, means Rider in Japanese.

**Burneson- ****Comes from two languages.

>

**Burne- ****derived from ****_Burana_, which means ****restoration or integrity in Thai.****

>

**_son-_ derived from _san,_ the Japanese formality name, like "Sir" in English.

>

Unobvious- "not obvious".

**Shotblast-**-****A word I made up. Means "shot blast".**

**Embarrassedly-**-**** "with embarrassment".**

**Adventurey-**-**** I made this one up. "with adventure".**

**Mikata-**-**** Friend, Japanese. Still looking for other Kanji that also sounds the same.**

Updated: Mikata- derived from Mi(no)kata- è|³(ã•@)é•Žăřš- Thousands of views. (lit. A plethora of views) -One who has different views for the same thing and different things alike.

2. Human

Prepare for an OC!

* * *

><p>"We did it!" I yell, raising my fist in triumph at the newly created (and now properly functioning) taifin's success in flying. We're up in the sky again, and after a darn good time of learning names and whatnot. I don't know why Toothless decided to tell me that last one, seeing that he thinks it's really personal, but I'm glad that he did. Now he won't have to just call me Hiccup. He can call me clumsy, boy, rider (though I'm not letting him call me that), or even integrity and I would know that he means me. I like _Maldrit_ the most, though. It's just soâ€| me.

It is? Toothless croons, carefully positioning his wings straight ahead so we glide smoothly through the air.

"Why didn't I feel that?" I ask, rubbing my head. Usually, when Toothless looks into my thoughts, I feel the sound of a dragon breathing or snorting as his thoughts combine with mine, but this time I didn't feel anything.

Well, for one thing, you were concentrated in thought, and two, Night Furies are pretty smart, he explains.

"I found that out by myself, that you very much," I mutter, and I get a warble in response.

The propulsion of the air feels amazing when you're gliding slowly though it. I mean, when you fly, you usually have to be fast to allow the wind to carry you upwards, but with the huge wingspan that Toothless has, it's not a wonder why he can keep us afloat with barely any effort (although I wouldn't call myself "little effort") at all. We're going so slowly that it's as if the clouds are the one chasing us in this blue, blue sky, and not the vice versa. I want to know how a dragon flies. It sounds really interesting.

I can give you lessons, he calls from below me. _However, you have to start by growing a pair of wings, a pair of tailfins, and an extra pair just in case you fail._

"How do you just keep on _entering_ my thoughts like that?" I ask, my face burning with embarrassment. "I don't really like it-"

I stop abruptly. "I didn't mean that," I say, covering my mouth with my hands.

I think you did, Toothless says softly. _Don't worry. I won't-_

"No," I say, patting his ears. "Just keep doing what you do."

Is that an insult? he asks, warbling below me innocently. _Because I don't feel offended at the moment._

"No, it's not," I say. "You're a dragon, and you have every right to look into my mind."

At your permission, of course, he grumbles. _What do you think I see you as?_

"A big source of fish?" I ask, rolling my eyes. "A path to

survival?"

A **Mikata**,_ you idiot,_ he says.

I fall silent for about 3 seconds.

"And a source of fish-"

**Mikata**-

"-And dragon nip-"

I am seriously going to scorch you alive.

"C'mon, why are you being so humble?" I say, grinning. "You know very well that you like to make fun of me, and that's not going to change."

What if it does? he asks, narrowing his eyes. I smile.

For someone as strong as Toothless, he _is_ kind of stubborn.

"Bring it on," I say, crossing my arms and smirking.

We fly in silence for 1 second.

We fly in silence for 2 seconds.

We fly in silence for-

Your hair kind of smells, you know that? he says, then instantly stops and whimpers. _Oops._

I laugh. "See?_ Nothing_ is going to change, Toothless."

He grumbles.

There are just some times that I just wished that I could throw you off my back and let the eels eat you, he mumbles. I don't answer, wondering what he'd do if I didn't.

When I continue to not answer for, say, 3 minutes straight, he whimpers quietly. I take this opportunity to look into his thoughts. It's not that hard, really- you just have to think of that person or being a lot, and eventually you'll get access to their thoughts. Just like right now.

Oh, no. Does Hiccup hate me? he thinks, his tone worried and frightened. _Will he leave me when I land? Oh no. Did he take that comment seriously? No. He's smarter than that. No no no no. I might be a little bit smarter than him- no, I can't think like that, right? He's smarter than me. I can't let my cockiness get to me. Oh no. Will Hiccup ever talk to me again? Does he like me anymore? Are we still friends? I really want to hear him talk again-_

"Toothless," I say, but he doesn't hear me.

_I have to apologize to him. I can't- I can't bear the thought of him never talking to me again! This is my fault! I have to take care of this. Be strong, Toothless! you can do this. Hiccup is everything

to you, Toothless. You can't lose him, Toothless--

"Toothless," I say loudly, and he shakes his head gruffly and roars.

I'll get fish for you every day! he blurts out.

The air gets so quiet that you could've heard Toothless breathe.

Oh, wait.

A _really_ tense silence follows, to which I finally break by breaking into a small of laughter.

"You really thought I wasn't going to speak to you anymore?" I say, trying my best to not laugh. Well, loudly, anyway.

Y-you heard all that? he says spluttering and nearly losing control of his flight. I have to hold the rope tight so the artificial tailfin can support the now faltering one.

"Didn't mean to," I say innocently, but my laughing is far more than enough evidence that I have something to blackmail him with now.

He whimpers quietly. I wonder if dragons can blush. I look down, and no, only his eyes are the things that are abnormal. He doesn't even look like he _has_ cheeks to begin with.

I didn't mean it, he says. _What I said. I'd never do anything like that to you._

"I know, Toothless. Sorry that I made you worry."

His whimpers change into growls as I say this.

Why didn't you say anything, **Aho**? he asks.

"Pardon me?" I ask, laughing slowly subsiding.

It means idiot, he explains. _I don't really use this word, but--

"Maldrit sounds better," I offer.

He roars loudly. I can see the seagulls flying away from their nest in fright.

You're not going to get mad if I really throw you into the ocean?

"No, seriously, **Aho** is just--"

He flaps his wings forcefully once, sending me high into the air. The lock jams itself as Toothless glides in the air safely while I, uh, begin my slow descent into the water below.

At first, I can only think of one thing as I fall face-first downward: "Stubborn dragon."

Unfortunately, I can't hold onto that thought for long as I near the

sea. The wind pounds against my ears as the air resistance fights against gravity and the speed of my fall, causing me to hear less and less but see more and more of what's below.

"Oh, no. Oh, great," I think to myself. "I'm so dead."

Then, with little distance between me and the water below, I call out for the inevitable.

"Um, Toothless?"

A roar of a Night Fury breaks the sound barrier as the shape of a draconic figure dashes through the air, wings flapping with incredible speed, the tailfin still miraculously locked into place from the aerial boost earlier.

"Toothless."

His black body swoops under me and recieves my falling body gracefully, creating ripples in the water from the closeness of the stunt and the power of the near impact.

And, with all that happened, he looks at me haughtily. I glare at him, but I'm far too worked up to actually find a retort. For this moment, I'm just glad that Toothless cares for me.

"Remind me to never challenge you to anything again," I say, heart beating loudly from the heart-stopping stunt that Toothless has once again pulled off.

You're not mad at me, right? he asks, his ears falling back somewhat anxiously.

I roll my eyes. "And I guess that I'm supposed to be mad at you or something?"

He croons. Well, you were pretty scared-

"Tell me, did you wait until the last second until I called your name to come down?"

No, he says.

"Then I'm not mad," I say, panting heavily. "Although I'm pretty shaken."

He snorts. **Aho** boy, thinks that he can die while being immortal._

"I'm only immortal because you were there to save me," I snap.

He croons happily, but in the silence, I know that he's feeling guilty.

So am I, Hiccup, he says. So am I.

H

"Speaking of which, where are we?" I ask, looking for any signs of

possible familiarity. As you can guess, of course, there isn't.

I'm not sure, either, Toothless croons, closing his eyes and letting his inner flame feel the way.

We fly in silence for another good minute before Toothless opens his eyes again.

The tailfin's locked in place, so I can't actually change course, and since the wind is blowing towards the ****Polaris****, that's where we're headed, he says.

"Sounds like a good place to start," I say. "Maybe Night Furies make their nest where it snows all year long."

Maybe, Toothless says. _It could be on the other side of the world, for all we know._

"Have you seen the world before, then?" I ask, eyeing him curiously.

Not that I got far before the Queen found me, he says disdainfully.

"Oh," I say. "Sorry."

But maybe I have _been somewhere no one ever hasn't,_ he says thoughtfully. _Imagine that._

"You would call it Toothless Island," I say, chuckling.

He glares at me.

"Fine," I say. "Just stop being so caring of me already."

Unfortunately, as long as you care for me, and even if you don't, I will care for you, he says.

"That basically means all the time," I say. He nods.

_Duh. I'm _supposed_ to care about you,_ he says, sailing over a patch of land. The sun is getting lower and lower, the end of the day shown so strongly in its dying rays.

"Then don't show it in every single comment you make, then!" I say, rolling my eyes. "I _know_ that you care about me. I love you too, but am I supposed to hug you _all_ the time?"

Yes, I say, laughing. _And scratch my back, too._

I roll my eyes. There really is no arguing with this dragon-

"Toothless, stop looking into my thoughts."

A groan comes from him below.

Dammit, he mutters. _Can't I just look into your thoughts for, like, 5 seconds?_

"No. And you should land too. That tailfin must be getting to you."

Perfectly said, he says, crooning.

****T****

As we land onto the mainland of the island, I can hear the sound of rustling leaves in the wind. And those aren't my wings flapping.

Someone else is here, I tell Hiccup quietly, even though my voice isn't even verbal.

"Really?" he whispers back. "What do you say?"

Can you communicate by thoughts? I say, narrowing my eyes and darting around for any other signs of life. The wind dies down and the leaves fall silent again, and all is silent.

"I'll try," he thinks. "Like this?"

Hiccup's thoughts feel more dreamy and bursting with thoughts, rather than the sarcastic and dry humanish voice that inhabits the vocal chords of his. I can feel his happiness inside, his own inner flame that he got from me (and to which he doesn't know exist), his care and passion, his inner feelings toward Astrid, his mate, and me.

I don't understand why Hiccup would use this sarcastic behavior as a mask to hide his real identity. He's a really caring boy, and will go to any lengths to save someone from the smallest of pains, and yet he never acts like he cares, even though deep down, he cares for every minute of his single life, and it burns his soul to a crisp when he knows that he cannot help someone in need.

I wish he'd show out this good side of him more often. _I_ certainly have no problem in expressing my feelings. If I'm protective of him, then I will be freaking protective of him, not waiting in the wings and dashing out only when there is danger.

Although I wonder if he's fine with that. I never really asked, unfortunately.

"Do you mind if you stop looking into my thoughts already?" he asks sarcastically. Inside, however, I can feel his kindness-

"No. Seriously, Toothless."

Fine, I whine. _But this place isn't safe._

He gets off my back and inspects the tailfin.

"This thing isn't going to close anytime soon," he says firmly. "I need to hammer this damn thing out again, and until then, we can't go anywhere."

I can feel my inner flame boiling in panic. _You mean we're stuck?_ ****_Here_****? I ask, scanning the perimeter cautiously.

"Yes."

No campfire today. Too risky , I warble. Then I remember that I'm supposed to be quiet.

"Don't worry," he thinks. "I'll manage."

He begins climbing a tree and looking for a suitable spot to sleep.

That is, of course, until I snatch him back with my Toothless mouth.

"Hey! Put me down!" he thinks. I admire how he still has the sense to mentally send his thoughts instead of yelling out loud.

You are not _going anywhere out of my sight,_ I growl.

"You can still see me from there, right?" he asks, but I can hear the mental sigh of resignation in his head. "_There really is no arguing with him._"

My ears fall back for a moment, but I realize that his needs are, once again, more important than his wants.

You can sleep next _to the tree,_ I point out, gesturing towards its sturdy trunk.

"Yeah, I think I'll do that," he says, pulling out a blanket and walking over to the tree.

A lie in wait not far away, eyes alert for any signs of trespassers. If this place is a mountain, then we must be at its foot, where the water below and the rocks above can easily get to us. We're in the most delicate place of places, with only the trees above that Hiccup cannot climb (thanks to his artificial leg) as shelter, and _that_ isn't even halfway decent shelter.

Finally, Hiccup comes back over to me, shivering.

"Alright, _**Noxon**_, " he thinks quietly, "I believe that you are warm and I'm not."

I warble softly, watching as he rests on my side, blanket covering the majority of his body. His head lies perfectly on my warm scales, giving him the feeling of lukewarm and care together.

Noxon? I ask. _As if_ Nox _wasn't bad enough?_

"I was under the impression that son meant someone of higher status."

I stare at him in awe. Where did he learn these linguistic facts from?

"Well, you _are_ a lot bigger and smarter!" he thinks loudly.

Allow me to scorch you alive the next time you say that, I growl. _I'm not smarter than you._

"Of course," he says, rolling his eyes. "You're a Night Fury. You're a frooking _genuis_."

I'm actually about to throw some fire onto him (his immortality has also granted him the immunity to Night Fury fire, so I'm in no real danger of actually hurting him), when I hear the rustling again, this time close enough for my eyes to slit aggressively.

It's right behind me.

I wheel my head around, sneering loudly at the source of the footsteps.

"Huh? Toothless?" Hiccup asks, getting up and walking up to my side, not bothering to use his thoughts anymore- there is no point in hiding again when you are in full view of your target.

I get up and slowly walk towards the noise, growling loudly. "Who's there?" Hiccup asks.

"I'm sorry!" a male voice yells in fright. "I didn't mean to-"

"You've been here for a while," he says. "What do you want?"

"I..." the voice recoils in pain. "Ow..."

Huh? I ask, lowering my wings but not my guard. I can see the man in the dim light of the moon now. His body is scarred in places, his clothes ripped, and a gash in his leg means that he's been limping for a while. My eyes instantly widen. I may not trust this being yet, but Hiccup does, and I trust Hiccup.

Hiccup walks slowly towards the man- no, _boy_, who is too hurt to move. He's about to fall to the ground when Hiccup rushes up to him and holds him up. He slings the boy by the shoulder, grunting slightly under the weight. He can't be older than Hiccup, and he certainly doesn't look any taller, either.

"You alright?" Hiccup asks the other boy. He nods, but I can see right away that that's a lie.

His leg is in only a little bit better shape than yours, I tell Hiccup. _You better get that fixed before he loses it completely._

"Oh, great..." he says, hauling the boy over to rest by my side. He may have made an indication to flee from me, but with Hiccup's gentleness and his own pain mixing together like honey in water, slowly sweetening the mixture but not yet blending in means that he can't really do anything about it.

"_Me,_ " Hiccup corrects. "Stop using _it_ as a pronoun for yourself."

_Yes, _Mikata, I say. He smiles.

The other boy looks at Hiccup confusedly. "Are you talking to the dragon?" he asks.

"I'd usually ask you to guess, but at this rate, I think I'll tell you right away," he says, smiling. The boy slowly turns to face me, and I give him the Toothless smile, hoping that I look at least halfway friendly.

"This is Toothless," Hiccup says, patting my side. "How about you?"

"I'mâ€¦ Sena," he says. My ears perk up at the word.

**_Sena?_ **As in, _different land_? I ask, then remembering that I can't exactly speak the human tongue.

The way he pronounces it is actually translatable into ancient Dragonese, meaning that he lives in a place where dragons also have once thrived. This boy may hold the answer to the Isle of Night's whereabouts.

"Didâ€¦ he ask me something?" he asks nervously, looking at me. Somehow, I feel more calmness than fear in him now than fear.

Hiccup repeats the question as he tends to his wounds, trying not to show his curiosity.

"I come from the lands of the North," he says, wincing every now and then whenever Hiccup dried some blood off him and his clothes. "I was separated from my family a few days ago when I was out looking for land."

_Guess you _did _find land,_ I think, but Hiccup shoots me a disapproving look.

"H-how do you- ow- talk to h-him?" he asks Hiccup. The Berkian boy chuckles and points to his heart.

"We have our own personal language," he says proudly. I croon in confirmation.

"...Neat," Sena says. "And I can't ask you if it's safe to be next to a dragon, right?"

"You may, but you already know the answer," Hiccup says. I warble.

"That's so cool," he says, looking at me and Hiccup. "How did youâ€¦ trainâ€¦?"

Hiccup glares at meâ€¦ for not showing any reaction towards this animalistic statement.

"I didn't _train_ him," Hiccup says as he looks for a new cloth to dry Sena's wounds. "I accidentally shot him down, andâ€¦ he didn't kill me for that. So we kinda bonded after that." I warble happily.

"So he's your p-" _I_ glare at Sena this time. "Friend, then."

Hiccup smiles in relief. "Yes. And don't call him _anything_ but that," he says. "We're not a pair to be looked down upon."

Except by each other, I snort.

Hiccup suppresses an urge to throw the cloth at me.

"How did you get all these wounds, Sena?" Hiccup asks, pointing to the huge gash in the leg. It's stopped bleeding now, but it looks like it's getting worse from the inside. It's turning green, and will probably spread up to the rest of his leg pretty soon. If this guy has any chance of surviving, it's going to be by a powerful medicine of sorts.

Not even Night Fury saliva can heal this thing. I certainly couldn't heal Hiccup's.

"I was attacked by something," he says. "It came out from nowhere, turned me into _this_," he gestures to his shabbed up body, "And went off almost instantly. It also burned my calf."

"Must be a Terrible Terror," Hiccup says, handing him a set of spare clothes to change into.

Must be an **Ennui**, I say, before realizing that Hiccup just said the same thing.

"You name the dragons too?" Sena asks. "How do you even get _close_ to them?"

Hiccup smiles at this one. "How would you get close to another human, then?"

"Earn their trust?" Sena asks.

"Exactly," Hiccup says.

****H****

In a matter of no time, Sena is my new friend. He's talkative and likes to joke a lot, but he can be serious too.

His jet black hair, green tunic, and black boots seriously reminds me of myself. However, he looks like he's stronger than me, but then again, who isn't?

I decide to know more about this Northern boy. He doesn't look harmful, and we _are_ helping him. It's human nature to repay what has been given to us.

"Toothless, do you mind ifâ€¦" I ask him nervously. I'm afraid that he might feel annoyed that I'm not talking to him, but he only shakes his head and nudges me towards Sena's body, who is now laid down by Toothless's scaly side, the warmth coming to us both. Toothless then goes to sleep, thinking something about _Stormfly_. I roll my eyes.

"Seriously? You're going to _dream_ of her?" I ask him. Sena looks at me confusedly.

Can I not pursue my desires as a young Pax Sinistre, _then?_ he shoots back.

I roll my eyes as he goes to sleep peacefully, knowing very well that any troubles that may arise will be triggered when I tell him mentally.

"He has a girlfriend?" Sena asks as Toothless snores softly. Usually, he'd sleep on my lap, but I sort of need his heat, especially after I gave up my blanket up to Sena and all.

"He has a _crush_," I correct. "And he fantasizes about her all the time."

"I wish _I_ had a girlfriend," he mutters, wincing at the pain of his leg.

Trying to veer away from the subject, I point to his leg. "That thing's not going to heal," I say. "I don't want you to end up like me."

He nods, having seen the prosthetic (and talked about it) from earlier. "I'll need to find a place toâ€¦ well, you know what," Sena says quietly.

I glare at him. "No way," I say. "You're not going to die. I absolutely forbid it."

"And what can you do about it?" he asks sadly. "No offense, but be it cutting off my leg or leaving me here, I'll die either way."

"No," I say. "You're going to see your family and friends again. We'll find a way."

He grins sadly, tears threatening to fall from his eyes.

"I appreciate the offer," he says, wiping his eyes with one of his hands- the other is too ragged to do anything at the moment. "But I don't really want to get you into trouble."

I stare at him. What kind of person throws life away as if it was a piece of cloth? And who the _hel_ thinks that life isn't worth getting into trouble for?

"Do we really need a reason to help you?" I ask, opening my bag and handing him some bread.

"Huh?" he asks, looking at the bread, not understanding my offer.

"Eat," I say. "You're coming with us."

He looks at me like I'm crazy.

"But, Hiccupâ€¦ I'm in this stateâ€¦ how am I supposed to help you at _all?_"

"Start by eating this bread. Seriously, I'm not hungry," I say, though my stomach is protesting.

He gingerly accepts the small loaf of bread.

"Thanks," he says. "But aren't you going to be hungry in the morning?"

"We all will," I say, smiling. "But right now, you need to eat."

After a short silence, Sena looks at his arms. They're in good shape enough to move around now, enough for him to put his hands behind his head for more comfort.

"I don't get it," he says.

"Don't get what?" I ask.

"Why you're being so kind to me," he says, staring into the sky above.

I frown. "Kind?"

He gives me a blank look.

"The blanket," he says, nodding towards the soft cloth, "The warmth," he nods towards Toothless, "The food," he nods at the bag, "and the _trust_. Why do you trust me so easily? What if I was a bandit, ready to attack you at a moment's glance?"

"You may be a bandit for all I care," I say, "But you're still hurt. And you're my friend."

A quiet silence follows as Sena looks at his wounds again.

"I guess I _am_ going with you, then," he says. I can tell that he feels guilty, but on the other hand, he also feels hopeful, like he might be able to see his parents again.

"Welcome aboard, then," I say, smiling.

****S****

I can't believe it.

Two days ago, I was lost from my parents when the trading ships ran astray. I got off and looked for any source of land, but as soon as I got off, a huge gust of wind carried the ships away. I found a shore after several hours of swimming and even more of just floating aimlessly, and I fell asleep there on the coast.

One day ago, I was looking for food and desperately finding a way to survive in these treacherous lands. I was attacked by a hungry Terrible Terror, and I barely made it out alive.

And exactly three hours ago, I was found by a boy just older than me along with a huge dragon. And not just any ordinary dragon.

A _toothless_ dragon.

I mean, well, he _does_ have fangs and everything, but he's harmless-towards the boy named Hiccup, anyway. And me.

And he's just so kind, you know. I mean, yeah, I'm younger than

him at all, but he treats me like we're equal. He's giving me all this stuff, and how I'm going to repay all this back would be wondrous. I don't have money, I don't have any real possessions, since my family is horribly poor, butâ€¦

"Say, Sena, have you ever heard of the Isle of Night?"

The ****_Niison_****, as my village calls males of older status, asks me another question. I've been asking back in equal measure, wanting to know more of his life, and it turns out that we're different in some ways and the same in some as well.

I guess that the best way that I can repay him at the moment is information.

"The Isle of Night? Yes," I say. "Isn't that a paradise where Night Furies live?"

"Yeah, it is," he says, looking up into the stars above. He looks a lot like a dreamer, you know. One who could stare at the sky for days and think so much about life. I possibly couldn't do that; I have a terrible attention span when it comes to my own mind. I'm hyperactive, and I like to run around.

"I think that it lies on a large landmass," I say, trying to recall the legends of my village, ****_Nord_****. "Its top is covered permanently with snow, so it should be somewhere with snow."

"That's a lot of places," Hiccup says, shrugging and making a note into his notebook. I've never really liked writing, but the way he writes, how he gives his all when it comes to inscribing those little symbols onto parchment, is quite intriguing. I can read and write a little bit, but I swear that I'm going to learn more from now on.

"That sounds interesting," Hiccup says, closing his notebook shut. The night sky is so brightâ€¦

"Can you teach me how to read?" I suddenly blurt out.

Hiccup, ****_Niison_****, looks at me curiously. There is no contempt or condescension in his voice nor face at all. "You can't read?"

"Well, not a lot," I say embarrassedly. "I only know the basics."

"Gee, my mother taught me how to write when I was young," he says, looking at a star in the sky. I see it as Sirius, the brightest star in the sky.

"I see," I say. "Can you teach me, then?"

He nods. "First thing in the morning. Then, when Toothless wakes up, I'll fix his tailfin and we'll fly up north to find your family- and a cure to your leg."

He smiles at me and leans backwards. "G'night."

I nod. Hiccup lies his head back down on the dragon, Toothless's back, and closes his eyes. I watch him as he does so, his arms by his

side, bare from the blanket that I now had instead.

"Hiccup?" I ask, watching him slowly doze off into the night.

"Yes?" he asks, his voice slurry and sleepy.

"Good night," I say, and after he's asleep, "Thank you."

* * *

><p>AN: I lied! I had several periods off today, so I got the time to write all this down. But I won't update tomorrow, though, sadly.**

Glossary:

**Aho**** - Crazy, ****Japanese.**

Polaris- the North Star.

Sirius- the brightest star in the sky.

**Noxon- Nox + son.**** "Mr. Nox" or "Respected Nox". See last chapter's glossary for more details.**

**Sena-**** ä,-é,£, if your computer supports it. ä,- (Se) in Japanese means "world", "land", and é,£ (Na) in Chinese means "that". I combined them and derived their meanings a bit to get "Different land." (Alright, I admit. This is a tribute to one of my childhood classmates all the way from Grade 3.)**

**Niison- Nii (****brother, Japanese**_**) + son (**_**san**_**). **_**Similar to Noxon, Niison means "Mr. brother" or "Respected brother."**

**Nord-**** North, French.**

**If I missed any (or, if screwed up anything), be sure to let me know! **

3. Poison

Sena is still here, and is a prominent character of this chapter. Enjoy!

* * *

><p>In the morning, Sena is not leaning on Toothless's warm side.<p>

His blanket lies- wait, on me? I blindly feel the cloth with my hands, and yes, it's the same one that I let Sena use last night.

I focus my eyes and see him sitting alone not far from us, guarding the bags that we hastily forgot to pack back up when we saw Sena last night.

I rack my thoughts again. Sena we met him only last night. How did we grow so close that fast? It's not like we have a lot in common,

but he makes me think like we do.

I focus my eyes again and see himâ€¦ looking into our bags.

"Hey!" I say, discarding the blanket and walking over to him. "What are you doing?"

Sena gives a little shriek of fright and jumps away from the bags, whimpering in pain as the leg starts hurting again. The wound's swollen and now looks very infected; he's not in a position to do anything but rest now, and yetâ€¦ what is he doing?

"I'm sorry," he whimpers, clutching his leg in pain. "Iâ€¦ didn't have anything to do, and I didn't want to wake you up."

I look at him piercingly. It's something that Toothless has taught me, over the months. I can tell that he's lying, butâ€¦

"Tell me the truth," I say gently. "What were you doing with the bags?"

Sena looks at me frightfully. His eyes are shaking from fear, and his leg doesn't help at all to soothe the increasing guilt that mounts inside him.

"I'm sorry," he says quietly, hanging his head down. "I really am."

I sit down next to him, scanning through the bags swiftly with my eyes. Nothing has been taken, though their interiors may need to be sorted again.

"What's wrong?" I ask, holding out a hand to his shoulder. He looks up at my touch, his eyes frozen in shock. I

"Iâ€¦ I told you before that my family was poor and everything, right?" he says quietly. To my back, I can hear Toothless sleeping, but his breathing is slightly more heavier and a part of his mind is still looking out for danger. Night Furies seem to have that kind of micromanagement while unconscious.

"I recall that," I say, urging him to continue.

"Yeahâ€¦ I usually have to help the family find food," he says.

"Don't we all?" I ask, which is sort of ironic, seeing that I left my own to find Toothless's mother.

"Wellâ€¦ you and your dragon-" he begins.

"He's not my dragon," I say, removing my hand from his shoulder. He shudders a bit at this movement, which gets me thinking. Why does he dislike physical contact? "We're friends. We don't own each other, and even though the words don't really mean anything, it's still a reminder to how most people see friends, you know. As something they own."

"Right," he says. "Sorry."

"Go on," I urge.

"You guys trade," he says, "But I steal."

I raise an eyebrow. "Steal?" I ask, resisting the urge to comfort him again.

"My family lives in the lowest parts of the village," he says. "There, the water runs down and any crops that we harvest are destroyed, so we have to get our food by buying it from the people in the main town."

"That's unfortunate," I say, but I can already feel a burning injustice in this twisted twist of fate.

"But since we don't actually have crops, we can't sell it for money, so my mother and father usually fish," he says. "But it's almost never enough to feed us three. So I have to go to the market and find some for my family."

My face contorts in thought. "What do other people think of you, then?"

"I don't know," he says. "I have a few friends that live nearby my house, but I've never really talked to people from above. I just go in, get what I need, and get out."

"Is this how you lived the most of your life?" I ask, becoming more and more interested by the moment, and becoming more and more sympathetic towards him. I've always been the son of the chief, and even though I was always the hiccup of the village as well, I always had enough food to eat. I never had to steal or rely on petty thieving to get my ways, because I didn't need to. But Sena does he have much of a choice in living at all?

"Since I was old enough to talk," he says sadly. "But it's not like I'll get to steal again anyway."

I glare at him and his incredibly low want of life. Humans are selfish creatures, I can't deny that. But is it wrong to want your life? Is it wrong that when we live, we have a reason to, and with that reason we use it to propel ourselves to greater and greater greatness? Lots of things make life special, but obviously Sena has never seen much of it. He has friends, he has family, but does he have what I have?

Does he have the love that I and Toothless share platonically?

Does he have the love of a girl that I want so badly?

It looks like I'm going to have to give him what I can.

Before he can object, I reach over and hug him gently by the neck. He recoils from the touch, but doesn't pull away. He just lets me hug him awkwardly as he is silenced again.

"I understand what you've been through now," I say, patting his back. "That must be why you were looking into my bags for food."

"Yes," he says, shivering slightly despite the warm arms of mine

on his shoulders. "Hiccup, what are you doing?"

I chuckle. "Don't you know what this is, Sena?" I ask.

"It's something that Mom and Dad used to do to me," he says. "But I didn't know why."

I pull out of the hug and he shivers even more.

"Iâ€¦ that wasâ€¦ what was that?" he asks, staring at me.

"That was something you liked, didn't you?" I ask gently.

"It felt warmâ€¦ inside," he says, touching his still slightly flamed chest with his hand.

I chuckle. "Of course it did," I say, pointing to his heart. "It's what you feel when you know that someone cares about you."

His eyes widen. "You _care_ about me?"

I want to seriously hit him for not knowing such obvious things, but that wouldn't be really good for feelings of care that I have for him. Well, actually, I care for everything I come in contact with, Toothless the most-

Me too, Toothless's dreamy voice interrupts my line of thoughts. And he's still _sleeping_.

-but Sena, and with all that he's known and all that he hasn't, needs a lot of care.

A lot of whole-hearted care.

"Knowing what you've gone through," I say, chuckling, "It's hard not to."

"Butâ€¦ I thought you were just helping me," he says. "I thought that you were just making me feel better."

"That's not how people work," I say, but I'm at a loss for words. How can someone be so _clueless_ to care and love?

Toothless snorts in his sleep behind me, causing both of us to turn towards him in surprise. Sena looks at me confusedly, but I just laugh. Even a sleeping Toothless is a _very_ aware Toothless.

"Eavesdropping reptile," I mutter, turning back to face Sena.

Dragon dr-

"No. Go back to dreaming about Stormfly."

Alright, he chirps, his breathing falling again.

"Isn't he asleep?" Sena asks curiously. I nod.

Some part of me thinks that Toothless orchestrated that part to get

rid of the awkwardness that was growing between me and Sena, but I just shrug.

"There are people who still care for you," I say, pointing to myself and Toothless. "You can't just say that you're going to die and all."

"But is there a cure at _all?_" he asks, looking at my prosthetic. "I don't want to... you know."

"I told you," I say, getting up. "We'll find a way. If youâ€¦ die, I'll never forgive myself."

"Wait," he says, reaching a hand out as I'm about to stand up.

"Yes?" I ask, looking at him curiously. "What is it?"

"Can youâ€¦ hug me again?" he says nervously. "Just for a bit?"

I sit back down and give him an amused, but caring look.

"Hugs usually work best when you need them," I say. "You know, when you feel like you need someone to watch out for you."

"Iâ€¦ I need it now," he says embarrassedly. "I want to live, too."

I hug him gently again, but this time, his hands reach back too. It's a soft hug, an awkward hug, a hug that probably didn't mean much to me, but it meant a damn lot to him. And, most importantly, it was a hug that he returned.

Something inside me wants to save him from his painful demise even more.

As I pull away from him, I can feel his happiness increasing. I'm not sure if this thing came along when I passed through Toothless's flames of life, but I can sense people's emotions- a bit. I'm not really sure of what to say to this, but I'm going to thank Toothless later on.

"So," I say, handing him a roasted fish from last night and holding up a notebook, "Which one do you want first? Food or reading?"

****T****

Hiccup and the boy from the North talk to each other all morning. They learn more about each other, play around a bit (but nothing physically, due to one being unable to and the other unwilling), and eventually decide to knock it off for the day. Hiccup fashions a small walking stick that he found the ground earlier and lets Sena use it for support.

You're quite the architect, aren't you? I ask, snorting.

"You can call me _that_, I guess," he jokes, bringing in the hammer and trying to ram the jam open again.

"What are you doing?" The boy from the north asks, limping towards us slowly.

Oh, chillin', I say, and Hiccup laughs.

"The lock got jammed when Toothless threw me off," _Mikata_ says, grinning. "I'm fixing it."

"He _threw_ you off?" Sena says, eyes widening in surprise. I snort and try to look as innocent as possible.

"Don't you dare act like that," Hiccup says, rubbing my tail. I snort. "Yeah, he threw me off. But we're always together, no matter what."

The *_Sena Chai_* looks at him unclearly. "You mean, he didn't mean to throw you off?" he asks.

"It's his way of having fun," Hiccup says, laughing. "Surprising me half to death by nearly putting me to death."

"That doesn't sound really nice," the boy responds, but Hiccup just smiles and hammers away at the prosthetic while I watch the two chat.

I can feel the boy's care for Hiccup growing by the minute- probably due to what Hiccup did when I was sleeping (but very well aware of Hiccup's status). When he hugged Sena, the latter initially did not see it as a gesture of care, but more as a violation of property and trust. However, as things progressed, the smaller boy came to know why people cared and why _Hiccup_ cared so much.

It makes me remember of how I met him the first time, you know. He showed a careless dragon what care was, and how being cared felt like. He showed a dragon who had lost his way the path to life again. And how good it felt to live for someone who cared for.

I can safely say that this boy is feeling the same way that I felt before. And how I feel now.

Cared for.

As per cliché, I'm about to go into bored mode and fall asleep, of course, when someone speaks up with a rushing confidence from inside. It's the sound of a physically strong boy.

"Can I have that?" Sena's voice suddenly rings out. I look at him with interest.

"Sure," Hiccup says, handing the hammer over to Sena.

Clang!

Sena rams the hammer down at the jam with such force that it diverges on impact.

Hiccup looks at Sena in awe and gratitude. I snort.

"Wow, Senaâ€¦| that was neat," _Mikata_ says.

"Heh, don't mention it!" the younger boy says, running the back of his head and blushing. "It feels nice to do something good for a change."

"Good to see you happy with life, now," Hiccup says, chuckling.

"I learned from the best," he says. "Maybe this is how I'm going to repay you."

Hiccup laughs, reaching out his hand to high-five Sena. Unfortunately, the latter doesn't know what that is, and only looks at the hand curiously.

He doesn't know, I whisper to Hiccup. Hiccup looks at him understandingly.

"You have to, uh, hit my hand with your own," Hiccup tries to explain, but he isn't getting anywhere with it. How did Astrid even _like_ this awkward guy?

I warble and hold up my newly fixed prosthetic up to his hand, and we move them together, creating a _smack_ sound that signifies the satisfaction of completing something together.

"Yeah, like that," Hiccup says to an astonished Sena.

"Al...right?" he says, holding out his hand to meet Hiccup's. He smacks it together, and for a moment, their hands are locked together, and I can feel the care flowing through them.

I could die of awkwardness, seriously.

****T****

A few hours later, everything is ready and we're preparing to take off again. There's just a small problem; Sena is in no position to actually be sitting like that with such a bad leg. The vibrations would hurt him. A lot.

"Um, Sena?" Hiccup asks the other boy nervously. "You sure you can do this?"

"I've been through worse," he says grimly. "This can't be that bad, can it?"

I'll try to glide as much as I can, I remark. Hiccup nods, climbing onto my back.

"Alright!" we're going to go to that island and see what's there," Hiccup says, pointing to a speck in the horizon. "The plants that Trader Johann brought last time were pretty rare, so anything could grow in these places."

"Do you know a lot about herbs?" Sena asks, resignedly climbing onto my back. The extra weight is little, seeing the two are pretty light.

"Not really, but Toothless does," Hiccup says. I croon.

Finest Night Fury in the area, I say, warbling. Hiccup rolls his

eyes above me.

Sena winces in pain the second we're in the air, so I slow my flight down to a glide as the island slowly grows larger and larger in the sky of my peripherals.

"You alright?" Hiccup calls and, when he doesn't get an answer "Sena?"

"I'm OK," Sena says through gritted teeth. "This is _handleable_."

I snort at his extensive emphasis of the word. This is not at all _handleable_, if it's even a word, for a human with a bad leg and a scarred body. I've got to slow down-

"No," Hiccup says. "Go faster."

Huh? I ask, not seeing the logic behind his latest words.

"He'll feel less worse faster," Hiccup says.

"N-no, it's ok," Sena says, clutching his leg as well as Hiccup's shoulder. "I- I can-"

Nope.

I flap my wings several times, giving us a burst of speed as we dash through the atmosphere in successive flight. The birds that lie ahead of us scatter as they frantically escape the incoming flight of the powerful Night Fury.

"Ahâ€¦ that hurtsâ€¦" Sena says, wincing in pain as he is forced to let go of his leg and grip Hiccup's shoulders tightly instead.

"It'll be over soon," _Mikata_ says, the island looming closer and closer to us by the second.

"H-hurry, please," he says, fear and pain creeping up into him slowly. Not only is this his first time for flying, it's also his first time that his leg has been this badly hurt. We need to get there soon, and hunt for-

"Whoa!" Hiccup yells, as Sena loses his grip and slumps down on Hiccup's back from the pain. Hiccup grips him tightly by the tunic to prevent him from falling.

He's out, I tell Hiccup. _I'll make this fast._

"Sure," Hiccup says. There is no fear in her voice, only care and determination.

Instantly, I flap in full speed, sending us shooting forward through the air. I onto the soft ground of the island in a matter of seconds.

"Sena!" Hiccup yells, hauling him off my back and struggling to keep him up, even with the prosthetic. I grab him by the arm as Hiccup grabs the other. I let him descend slowly onto the green grass below, setting the heavily breathing Sena down.

I look at him and whimper.

He's going to be alright, I say, sensing his pulse and heartbeats.
He's still breathing.

"Yeah, but will his leg be?" he asks, pointing at the swollen (and now throbbing) leg. Some of his wounds have re-opened from the excessive straining, and blood is flowing out again.

I sniff the island for any other signs of people, but there are none. I do, however, catch the scent of new kinds of plants that aren't on Berk. We must be high up north, to be able to feel these new types of plants.

I'll see what I can find in the woods, alright? I say, getting up from Hiccup's side.

"Please," he says. "I can't let someone die on me."

Nor would I, I say, and take off into the woods.

****H****

"Sena!" I say frantically, tugging at his tunic in anxiety. "Wake up!"

Sena gives a loud moan as the tunic constricts his breathing.

"Ah! No!" I yell, loosening it with shaky hands as his heartbeats gets harder and harder.

"Senaâ€¦ get upâ€¦" I say shakily. I open my bag and find a notebook. I fan it over him vigorously, hoping that the cool breeze will soothe him, but he doesn't stir.

I wish I could feel his pain like I can feel Toothless's soft breathing through my brain. At least I'd know what I have to do to save him. Waiting like this feels like pure agony, my fear of losing Sena rivaling only the fear of losing Toothless.

But now, I have to do what I must. I ease my breathing and allow him to do the same by undoing the locks on his tunic. Thank goodness that he's a male; I would've died of embarrassment if this was a girl. Especially if it was Astrid. But, then again..

"Sena!" I say, fanning his face as he lets out a rough cough. From his breathing, it doesn't look like he's in any real danger, but his body definitely says otherwise.

"Owâ€¦" he says, trying to get up, but I force him right back down. Despite his strength, he doesn't object and lets his body fall limply onto the ground.

"Senaâ€¦ you'll be alright," I tell him, forcing a smile. Even when things are at its most terrible, I don't scream, and I certainly don't cry.

I'm not going to let Sena die. Imagine how badly I'd feel. How crippled the trust between me and Toothless be, if I let someone die.

If I can't save a normal friend, how the hell am I going to save a near-eternal one?

"The legâ€|" he says, pointing to it. It's become a ghastly white, meaning that its insides are soon to die. Just like how mine went.

"Sena," I say, holding up his hand. "Justâ€| lie there, alright? Toothless is getting herbs from the forest. There are herbs here." I can feel Toothless's breathing hitch slightly.

He moans again in pain. "Heyâ€| it's been nice knowing someone cares, you know," he says weakly.

I glare at him, but I drop my anger quickly. In the thick of the thoughts, I smile again.

"Let me tell you a story."

Before anything else can happen, though, a huge black blur dashes toward us. His eyes are greenish, just like mine, and he stares into me and Sena's eyes.

Let me do this, he says, and I fall unconscious. In the split second before that, I see Sena's eyes close too.

H (Toothless's memory)

I'm looking at three Terrible Terrors. They skitter about in their miserable states, looking for food to eat in this beautiful world. My eyes eye them distrustingly, the stack of fish that I caught susceptible to petty theft from these lowlife nuisances.

I regurgitate a fish up for the _Maldrit_, his half-singed eyebrows making him look like a comedian indeed.

"Nah, thanks, I'm good," _Soter_, savior, says, holding up his own roasted fish.

I warble happily. I see one of the green nuisances (no, not Hiccup) jump around, looking at our fish hungrily. He makes a lunge for one of my fish, _my_ fish, and I pounce right back at him. I grab the fish by the head and hold on tight. The Terror croons in anger.

Give it back, you deranged dragon! he shouts at me, tugging at the fish.

Oh? Is that what you call me? I growl, pulling it loose from his grip and snatching it into my mouth.

Cheater! he yells. I punish him by shooting a firebolt into his mouth, causing his flames to be ignited briefly. His chest inflates and then deflates quickly, causing him to flop down in defeat.

I win, I say haughtily.

It's not fair! he says, attempting to croon but unable to produce any sounds other than whimpers.

Only the strong survive, I say, baring my fangs at him. I feel little to no sympathy for him, my thoughts concentrated at the fish-and at the human.

The strong do as they will, the weak suffer as they must.

The terror whimpers quietly and walks off to rejoin his friends.

"Now, now," _Soter_ says, handing one of his own fish to the terror. I resist the urge to take it back, but the Terror only looks at me timidly.

I d-didn't mean to take your food, he says, eyeing the _helper_ curiously. _Is he your prisoner?_

No, I sneer, glaring at him. _He saved my life. We're acquaintances._

_ 'Friends'?_ he says, grabbing the fish after some hesitation. He eats it like a common mongrel, slurping it loudly, biting it hungrily, and gulping it down in an unmannerly fashion.

I take a moment to consider this. He certainly is friendly towards me... am I ready to call this human a real _freind?_

Maybe? I ask, eyeing the person by my back softly. _We've been together for a while. He gave me this tailfinâ€¦|_

The Terror looks at it cautiously. _You can fly with that?_

Yes, I say. _I'm grateful for that._

The other Terrors join him as soon as they see that there is no danger in the human before them, and climb up onto my back. As I let them by not flicking them off, they skitter about unceremoniously.

How is it like, being friends with a human? he asks curiously, resting on top my back. A filthy dragon, on top of a noble one.

Oh, it's nice, I say. _He likes to bring me fish, and you should see us when we're in the air._

Interesting, he says, munching down another fish.

"Everything we know about you guysâ€¦| is wrong," he says, patting a Terror's head. A human patting a dragon, a dragon protecting a human.

That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to save the savior, and I will do it not out of debt, but out of feelings and care. I may think that he's a clumsy little boy, but his heart is anything but that.

Because everything I've known about humans is wrong as well.

****At the same time****

I knocked out Hiccup and Sena. At least they won't scream or

anything, now that they are in my thoughts and not with the real world.

Some of you might ask why I care about this Sena boy so much, even though he's not Hiccup, and even though he's done little to nothing to me.

But you've forgotten that I care about Hiccup. And whenever Hiccup is happy, so am I. If he is sad, I share that pain, so one of us alone wouldn't have to feel so bad. You've forgotten that this boy holds the key to the Isle of Night, to my mother. To my point of living.

And, most importantly, he's a boy, just like Hiccup. How am I supposed to let someone so young die? Stormfly would kill me if she knew.

Hiccup would kill me if he knew. I might be an arrogant dragon, but I certainly know what suffering is.

I let the herbs fall to the ground next to him. This is a small island, and there isn't actually that muchâ€¦ I was disappointed, at first. But I grabbed a lot of everything and hoped that it would be enough.

I start by licking his wounds clean with my tongue, the blood tastingâ€¦ nice to my taste buds, but I shut this idea out. All blood is blood, regardless of owner.

The wounds close itself softly, the skin new and fresh from my Inner Flame's healing. However, I have to reserve the most for the biggest physical wound yet.

I breathe a small, blue flame towards Sena's leg, causing the dried skin to become alive with the blood now flowing through, my fire emulsifying the blood to run once again.

Hopefully this thing will work, I say.

I gently scratch the infected area with my teeth, causing a small trickle of blood to run out. I take the herbs into my mouth and begin chewing, eyeing the blood that runs out carefully.

Had it been a few months ago, I would have eaten this leg aliveâ€¦ no, I mustn't think that.

As soon as there's a small pool of infected blood on the ground, I regurgitate the herbs up, now infused with Night Fury saliva, and place them softly on the wound. Since there's already a bit of lost blood on the ground, the poison needs more time to reach his system.

I scan his body quickly and see the herbs making its way up his legs, but the poison is already halfway up ahead towards his heart.

Oh, dearâ€¦ I think, wondering what I could do to stop the poison without ripping his body apart. There is nothing I know that can stop the infected blood nowâ€¦

But Hiccup does. Why didn't I think of him earlier?

I wake him up from my memories, nudging him frantically to get him to his senses.

"Owâ€¦ I didn't know that-" he says, rubbing his eyes. I growl, nodding towards Sena.

"Ohâ€¦ no."

_I need some of your inner flame. I can stop the poison with your help, _ I say.

The poison has reached his torso.

"My _what?_" Hiccup says nervously, staring at Sena's unconscious body.

_You have an inner flame, _ I quickly explain. The poison's reached his stomach. _That's why you can sense emotions, to an extent._

Hiccup's face quickly changes to understanding, his spirit and flame rising to the occasion.

"How do I use it?" he says determinedly.

I nudge towards the belly, where the infected blood is now at.

_Focus at that part, _ I say. _Make the blood there stop._

Hiccup stares at the belly intently. His inner flame can slow it down, but he can't stop it completely. I give it a sharp look, aiding Hiccup's already strong flame, and the blood stops completely, leaving the antidote to flow freely up his leg. But for how long I can muster this, I don't know.

The antidote is up to his torso. Just a little bit more-

"Toothlessâ€¦ I feel like I'm having a headacheâ€¦" he says, touching his head. I growl.

_Don't pass out, _ I say. _Then everything will have been for nothing._

"Ahâ€¦" he says, clutching his head as he stares at the wound.

The antidote has nearly caught up with the venom- when the infected blood starts flowing again.

_Hiccup! _ I say, seeing him crouched on the ground, clutching his head.

"I can'tâ€¦ I can'tâ€¦" he says, whimpering madly.

_Can't what? _ I roar, watching the antidote as it helplessly tries to catch up with the poison.

"My headâ€¦ feels like it's gonna explodeâ€¦" he says. His inner

flame is dangerously low.

Hiccupâ€¦ I need you to focus on Sena. Now.

The infected blood has nearly reached his chest.

"...More?" he says. I watch him as he begins fighting his own battles, care versus mentality.

Sena will live, Hiccup. Just focus, I say.

"Iâ€¦ Senaâ€¦" he gets up, his inner flame now rising again from his newly regained determination.

Now, I say, staring at his chest. Hiccup focuses on it too, but it's nearly at Sena's heart.

"T-" he begins, but I shake my head. Inner flame works best when you are concentrated on only one thing, apart from breathing.

The antidote finally reaches the poison, but suddenly, Hiccup passes out.

Hiccup! I roar, watching the blood as it begins its steady flow and finally reaches his vulnerable heart. _Dammit!_

Sena's heartbeat slows downâ€¦ and down. He's going to die soon.

Noâ€¦ I say, crouching over Sena's body. _Noâ€¦_

Hiccup gets up, his inner flame used up, disabling my mental communication with him, but his mental power still bound.

"Toothlessâ€¦ I'm sorry," he says, looking at Sena's body as the latter dies slowly.

You did your best, I say, but I remember that he can't hear me. And against all odds, I cry.

Not from pain, but from the feeling of failing Hiccup once again. I hurt him again, this time by failing to save someone he cares about.

"Toothless!" he says, wiping the tear away from my eyes.

Dammitâ€¦ I was so close, Hiccup. I say, and I don't care if he can't hear me.

I know he understands.

My inner flame also at a critical point, I withdraw away from Sena.

"Is heâ€¦ gone?" Hiccup asks quietly.

Reluctantly, I nod.

He slumps to the ground on his knees, his hands on the ground for

support.

"What the hellâ€¦ Senaâ€¦" he says, tears flowing down his face.

I walk up next to him, comforting him the best way I can, by being next to him.

This is my fault. If I had left him on the islandâ€¦ the Terror may have found him, but it would be way better than dying because of an infected leg like this.

This is my fault. I'm sorry, Hiccup.

I close my eyes, not wanting to see the loss of someone I wished I could do more to save.

For Hiccup. For Sena.

A splutter and a cough makes my eyes open instantly. Sena's breathing is increasing, his heart now beating again, albeit at a slower rate.

Hey! I say, nudging Hiccup softly. _He's safe!_

The antidote must have reached the poison as it was in the heart.

Thank goodness.

"Sena!" Hiccup yells, shaking Sena frantically, but I stop him.

It's going to take a while for him to get around, I tell him.
But he's alright now.

And, with the newly regained will and inner flame, Hiccup nods.

****T****

Through the afternoon and late into the evening, Hiccup doesn't leave Sena. He sits next to him, watching him silently as the wounds finally heal itself.

I wonder, by looking at Hiccup, if there is someone who is more than willing to knock himself up to help his friend as much as he can. There are several types of people in this world, but I have never seen anyone quite as loyal as Hiccup, even if he can't do much but support.

Still, it's the thought that counts. And it's often this thought that turns battles around, lets him get through the worst of situations, and makes him truly the more intelligent of the group.

"That's not true," he says, looking at Sena's peaceful sleeping position.

Hm? I ask, looking at him.

"You were the one with the inner flame and everything. You used it to

stop the blood, right?"

I did.

"I'm sorry that I did so little to help you."

No, Hiccup. You were by my side this whole time. Without you, Sena wouldn't have lived.

"I passed out on you."

You did your best.

"I hope I did."

Look.

Sena's eyes slowly open, his vision getting better and better as he focuses.

"Sena!" Hiccup says, watching as he gets up and looks around carefully.

"Oiâ€| hi," he says, smiling at Hiccup.

"Dammit!" _Mikata_ says, pulling him in for a hug. "You scared me half to death!"

"Sorryâ€| older brother," Sena says quietly. "I thought that I could stand the flight."

"Brother?" Hiccup says. Sena nods and hugs him back.

"Did I worry you much?" he asks innocently.

"Shut up, you're safe now," Hiccup says, letting Sena lean on him for support.

"You won't know what I saw while I out," Sena says excitedly.

Hiccup smiles, giving me a small wink and a mental _thanks_.

And, with that, I walk a fair distance away from the two and lay down to sleep. They'll be able to find food themselves, especially now that Sena's leg is healed.

Because, like dragon and human, human and human are also happy. And I don't really mind that much.

I'm just glad they're both safe.

* * *

><p>AN: I know a lot of you guys want Hiccup and Toothless to be alone together, but it's just not possible for a journey to not have encounters with other people. You've got to meet with new people, encounter new things, and live through these events together.**

**Thus, Sena will be staying for a while, but he'll be more OCish

from now on- until his time comes, of course.**

Glossary:

**_Sena Chai-_ comes from Sena and Chai. **

4. Flames

This chapter is highly drabble-based, and is about what happens during the night that Sena is healed (last chapter). It doesn't really advance the storyline, so you can skip this if you want.

* * *

><p>"Hiccup," Sena calls, holding up a fish. "See what I caught."<p>

"Wow, you caught that on your own?" I ask, sketching away at my notebook.

"I did," he says happily, setting the fish down on the ground. "Want one?"

"Well, after you lost all that blood and everything, I think you need the food more than I do," I say, pretending not to be hungry- because in reality, I am very hungry.

But you'll never guess who's hungrier than me.

"You sure?" Sena asks, looking at me curiously.

"Yes, Sena," I say, trying hard not to roll my eyes. "I'm fine."

"Alright, then", he says, running over to a fire that Toothless had made before he went to the beachhead.

Toothless said that he wanted to ponder about some things, but he wasn't going anywhere far- he'd still be in range of the Soul Language, though he said that things in his head were sort of 'personal' and didn't want to be heard. So I let him have his way. He slept for a while, but I don't think he actually got any rest. I wonder whyâ€|

"Hey!" Sena says, running back towards me with the fish. "This thing is hot!"

"It is," I say, chuckling. "Try not to burn your tongue."

"Alright," he says, running around and waiting for the fish in his hands to cool down.

In a sense, Sena looks like any other village boy, with dreams and thoughts, running and playing as any normal person would do. It's hard to believe that Sena, who was a thief all his life, could have such joy in playing, while I always stayed shut in my house, despite being the highest ranking child in the village. I'm actually drawing him right now, running in and out of the trees and waving the fish in

the air like he didn't have a care in the world.

Of course, he doesn't. At this age, we all do what we want, and we care little for those irrelevant to us.

Sena is strong, too. All those years of stealing and getting away must have turned him into a very fit boy indeed. He doesn't have muscles like Snotlout, but he has the glint of hyperactivity and the want to see more and more of everything, his newly found love doing much to fuel it, knowing that his friend(s) are safe meaning that he can do more and they would care less.

I can imagine Sena back at home, playing with his group of 'friends', kicking around dirt or hitting each other with sticks and mud. Oh, and snow. Dammit, when I was young, I would get plowed to the ground by snowballs the second I made myself apparent to the outside world. Not that my dad didn't know; it was just that he didn't _care._

And, of course, unlike Toothless.

On those days after the Red Death battle, he never left my side. Never once did he go off alone to do something. He could have been doing anything, having fun in dragon nip, talking to Stormfly, yet he chose to stay next to me. And I chose to stay next to him, because I knew he cared. Because, finally, I think I know what it means to be a happy person. It's by knowing that those who you care for care for you back.

In Toothless's case, he's more of the super protective friend, because he always snarls at the smallest of insults, growls at the slightest hints of physical harm, even go out of his way to just force people out of my way with his huge size. I know that he means well, but like he said, he's a young male dragon.

Young male dragons have fun and play, despite his claims of Night Furies being noble and majestic (because he likes to dream of Stormfly, to which I walked in on his dreams once- he wasn't happy, and I couldn't stop blushing). So, this is what we're doing and that he likes, right? He gets to have fun, play with me, andâ€¦ look for his mother.

So is that why he isn't here now? Is it because he's jealous of me and Sena being together? That Sena, as a human, can fulfil things to another human that dragons can't?

I don't like comparing Sena and Toothless together. They're two different beings, and they make me happy in different ways. Toothless makes me happy because he's always there for me, as I am for him, but Sena makes me happy because he reminds me of how powerful one's life before real life is. Sure, he _is_ mature to an extent, but right now, he's just a boy. I'm just a boy. We're not that different in age, but our past and how we deal with the present that makes us not the same.

For him, it's running around and using his energy to the test. for me, it's sitting down quietly and writing into my notebook. If I'm not drawing, I'm sleeping. Or, well, playing with Toothless.

But where is he?

Sena sits down next beside me and takes a peek into my notebook. I veer it away from him, but otherwise let him look at it most of it.

"Is that a notebook?" he asks, panting slightly from the running. "You wrote pretty well last time. Can you teach me more?"

I can sense something beneath that eagerness- curiosity. He wants to know what my notebook holds, and he's definitely going to look into it as soon as he can. Should I trust him, after all that has happened?

"Sure," I say, flipping the page. I begin to draw a few runes on the book, and read them aloud as Sena follows.

"**_Ku_**," I say, drawing an arrowhead with its head to the left. I show it to Sena.

"**_Ku_**", he says, staring at the inscription tentatively.

"**_E_**," I pronounce, drawing a roof with a broken center. "As in _Hey_."

"**_E_**," he says, "As in _Hey_."

"**_Th_**," I say, "Like _Thor_."

"**_Th_**," he says, hesitating. "Did you know that Thor is related to the Isle of Night?"

"He is?" I ask, ceasing to draw the next rune (a simple vertical line with two northeast poles sticking out of it) and looking up at him in surprise.

"Legends say that he created the Isle from when the land was barren with chaos and natural disasters," he says, looking at the stars. "He built the Isle to contain all these magical instability and wars that the world had made upon itself. When he finished building it, the land stopped shaking and the rain stopped falling except on the Isle of Night, where the disasters still occurred, but they were trapped inside the Isle of Night, and could not go out further."

I process these thoughts into my head. If Thor created the Isle of Night to contain natural disasters, then that means there are horrors there that mankind has never seen. There have been legends of exploding mountains, man-eating soil, and even giant waves of water flying through the air. Are these legends for real in the Isle?

Because that means that Toothless knows what these things are.

"That's pretty mighty of a god," I say nodding my head. "But how is this related to the Night Furies?"

"They said that Night Furies settled on this island and made it their home," he says. "Because of all the lightning storms that occurred here, they found it suitable for living, and they inadvertently became the protectors of the place, later being officially appointed

by Thor himself. That's why you don't really see Night Furies around. They come and they go only to keep the peace intact." He looks at me thoughtfully. "What do you guys call Night Furies?"

"The unholy offspring of lightning and death itself," I say. "How about yours?"

"The winged guardians of those who strive for peace," he says.

There's silence for a moment as I look at him in awe. Toothless is a freaking _guardian?_

"Night Furies are pretty cool, anywhere," I say, smiling.

"Yeah," he says, his face flickering in the firelight.

"I've always thought about Toothless being mighty and allâ€¦" I say, staring at the fire. "I didn't know that he actually was a guardian of peace and all."

"Hey, seeing your b-"

"He's not mine-"

"Seeing he's a pretty good friend of yours, I thought that you would think of him as a guardian anyway," Sena says.

"How?" I ask, confused.

"He protects your life," Sena explains. "And your feelings. Without him, you wouldn't be this kind toward me, right?"

I blush, not knowing why Sena would get all cheeky all of a sudden.

"Wellâ€¦" I say, hoping that he keeps it at just that. It's true that Toothless is the very first friend that I've ever been with. It's true that I love him more than anything else. It's true that we're friends for life, and yet, Sena makes the whole conversation so _embarrassing_ for me.

Not that our friendship of human and dragon is anything personal, but it's that Sena has known me for, like, two days and two nights, plus he's said that he's never experienced this much care before, but yet he can see my relationship as if I were an open book to read. The simplicity of his words, added with the youth, his innocence, makes his words truly a powerful thing to behold.

"Is there something wrong?" Sena asks, staring at my empty face.

"No," I say, turning towards him. In the eyes of mine from the mirror of the fire, he looks truly like a fighter. He probably is. "You're right, actually. I wouldn't have ever cared for anyone this much if it weren't for Toothless showing me how to."

Sena smiles what I guess would be a casual one. How does one _casually_ smile?

"Hey, I wish I was friends with a dragon," he says thoughtfully, breaking the awkward silence. "We'd share adventures just like you andâ€¦| Toothless."

"Well, it wouldn't be hard for you to find a dragon," I say, nodding towards the Night Fury flames. "You just need to show trust and care for them."

"Will they show me them back?" Sena asks nervously. "I still think most dragons are scary."

I laugh. "That's what I thought at first either," I say. "In the end, well, this is us."

Sena nods and we stay in silence for several minutes, him looking into the fire, me writing more runes for him for when he decides to learn more runes later on.

"Hey, do you know why the raids stopped a few months ago? The other villages were celebrating for days."

"It's a long story," I say, laughing. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

"Oh, I can manage," he says.

****T****

It's been so long since I've thought of mother this clearly and vividly. The beach at night and its clear, starry sky reminds me so much of her screech of pain ripping through the air, leaving nothing but the falling rain and the clashing of thunder. Now that you think of it, the sky never really changes. There can be storms and lightning and clouds, but the sky just stays the same, causing only changes in its climate and weathers though the course of time. So I could have been just here when I was born, amid lightning and rain, but because of its identicalness in all things, I'll never really know.

Humans use maps to mark things on land, but when it comes to water, the oceans and seas are usually replaced by a light blue, denoting simply water under the sky. We dragons have a sense of direction that we follow through the world like a grid of elaborate positioning, allowing us to know every different part of sea as different, despite what humans would see as simply 'water'.

So, in short, Mother could have laid me anywhere, because all I remember about my birth was an island, surrounded by water. Take away the lightning and rain, you get the massive sea.

Where are you, mother?

Are you still flying around the area where I was born, still flying in search for me? Are you with Father? If so, are you two happy together? Is the reason for my solitude a problem between you two? Do you have any other sons? Or daughters?

Are you still alive?

Are you still out there for me?

I want to see you, even if I never have. I want your care, even if you never gave me care. I want your loving and warm embrace, even though you have never as much as appeared for me to remember your body and traits.

I know that you care for me, but where are you?

Or do you not?

If I meet you, will you despise me? Why?

Is it because I never managed to find you, despite doing so my whole childhood?

Is it because you will not know me, not remember the baby Night Fury that I once was?

None of these questions really matter, but you do. I need you, mother.

I'll do anything to find you.

Because every night I will save your life

And every night I try to find with you

Because every night I still lay awake

And I dream of an absolution

Because every night I will make it right

And every night I will look for you

But every night it just stays the same

In my dreams of an absolution.

The stars in the sky look like dusts of broken dreams more than a representation of hopes. They're scattered about, their magnitude of destruction evident through their burning sorrow of fire, and their flickering adding the numerous pain of disappointment of not getting what was wanted. It's as if every time your dreams are broken, these shattered hopes join the other millions of others, are put away into the endless sky, stashed away and too far for you to ever reach.

Hiccup thinks that these stars mean wishes. He thinks that the blurry twinkles in the sky mean the burning fire of inexhaustible hope that all humans and dragons have alike. He thinks that the stars sparkle because we shine in our own will to live, to make things great, to make things right.

A shooting star passes through the sky, littering the dark blue sky with its powdery stardust and hopes and wishes that humans wish upon.

I'm a dragon. I don't wish on such silly things.

I'm a dragon who let a human on my back. Who let a friend on my back.

I'm am I a dragon, after all I've been through?

I've made a human immortal. I've made a friend that I love and care about deeply immortal.

Maybe I'm partly human too. If humans love stronger than dragons, than I definately human. Maybe I'm a Hiccup dragon. Not a hiccup dragon, but a loving, caring, Hiccup dragon.

Maybe wishes work only in those who believe in them. Like Hiccup.

I let out a long sigh and look at the falling star once again.

_Please let me find my mother, I think. _Please._

****H****

"Hiccup, can I ask you a question?" Sena asks, fidgeting with a stick he found on the ground. He doesn't look like he's a good drawer- more like he likes using these sticks for combat instead.

"Yes?" I ask, sketching away at my notebook. I'm drawing Sena, actually, as he looks at the fire, stick in his hand, his face full of thoughts and awareness.

"What's in that notebook?" he asks, pointing at the leathery covers of my book.

"Stuff," I say shortly. "There's a lot in here, too."

"Well, I can guess that," he points out. "Can I uh have a look?" he asks, looking at the notebook nervously. "If it's you know, okay with you."

I frown. "Well I don't really know about that," I say, guilt mounting in me higher and higher as I refuse something that I need from someone who also looks like he needs.

He shrinks back towards the fire. "Oh ok."

At that, he doesn't speak any more. The pain of it hurts me like a needle, jabbing at my brain, etching the same words over and over again: _You hurt someone. Again._

I want to tell him that this diary means a lot to me. I want to tell him that there are some personal things in here that he should probably not see, for it would hurt both me and him.

But, alas, I don't tell any of these to him. It's too pathetic for even me to say. The burns still pinch into my mind, but I don't know how to possibly tell him without making him see me as a total idiot.

So, it's Sena instead who comes up with the second question.

"Do you know what-"

"Sena, I'm sorry," I suddenly blurt out.

"What?" he asks, confused.

"I didn't let you see into my notebook," I say, snapping it shut and laying it down on my lap. "I don't want you to think that I don't care about you or anything-"

"I never thought of it that way," he pipes up. "I thought that you didn't want me to see it, that was it. I didn't think twice about it."

I can feel my cheeks burning redder and redder by the moment.

"Oh, ok," I say dejectedly.

"That's what I said to you a few minutes ago," he says, grinning. "Are you shy?"

I wish that I could just sink into the log and never be seen again.

"Just didn't know that you'd be so forgiving of it," I say.

"I told you, I don't really think that I need to know why you don't let me see it," he says, his jet black hair blowing softly in the wind. "It's yours. If you don't want to let others see it, that's fine."

I nod towards him in relief and gratitude.

"I wish other people were more like you," I mutter, laying the notebook down and staring at the fire.

"I wish people were more like you, ****Niison****," he whispers to him. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, I can hear him.

"Yeah, someone who hides simple secrets from their friends," I mutter.

Unfortunately, he hears that too.

"Hey, I hold a lot of simple secrets too," he 'whispers'.

"Like what?" I 'mutter' back.

"Like how I once ran off and stole the Chief's shoes when he was sleeping," he 'whispers'.

"Well, I once snuck out of my work to look at my crush," I mutter, before snapping my mouth shut.

Sena looks up and laughs. I smile shyly.

"If you think that's bad, then you've gotta see what I once did."

****T****

Hiccup! Leave! I yell, looking around as the chains lock around me.

I can see him, standing only nearby with that human mate, his expression sad and guilty.

"_I'm sorry, Toothless_, " is what is in his mind. Outside, he is panicking, looking for a way to get closer to me. To help me.

Hiccup! Go away! I roar mentally, fighting to break free of my imprisonment. _This place isn't safe!_

The older humans pile down on me, one of them even holding an axe. I'm going to die, and I'm going to die for a friend.

Maybe it's not the smartest way to die, but maybe it will make me happy.

Never will I have to fear for him again. Never will I make him annoyed again.

I know that Hiccup will be sad, but for now, he is safe from the hands of the devils. Right now, I am a diversion for these people, while Hiccup can make his safe getaway.

But why is Hiccup not running away?

"Dad! NO!" he screams, running towards me, only to be held back by his mate.

Good, I think. _Just run- wait, **Dad**?_

The devil is his father?

It all makes sense now. The reason why Hiccup has always been searching me out for comfort.

It's because his own darn _father_ treats him like this.

It's because his father treats dragons like _me_ like this.

I'm being hauled away as Hiccup screams my name one more time.

_Be safe, _ Hiccup. Don't let the devil get to you, I whisper.

I lurch out of my vision, panting slightly from the fear of losing Hiccup again. Once every while, I reopen one of my stored thoughts and go through them, watching their perfectly recorded moments and thoughts from my point of view. In hindsight, I see how much his father meant so little to him, but yet, Mikata was oppressed like some kind of doll while I was taken away, my fate entirely in the devil's hands, unable to reach the friend in order to comfort him.

If only I knew before that he had these parental issuesâ€¦ he had no mother, I knew that long ago. But I never knew that he had no real father either. I could have been a father to him. I could have given up my young instincts to give him the sense of protection that his own father never gave him.

But I can't, now. We're friends. There's no way I'm changing anything to change our balance of friend and friend. Besides, we _are_ pretty much of the same age, anyway.

There is no way in the world that my parents would mistreat me like that. Right?

Why did they never show up to you, then? A snide voice inside me calls.

Shut up. I thought you were helping me last time. My inner flame... talking to me again.

That was ages ago. What if the reason that you've never seen your mother is because Hiccup is with you?

What? Are you out of your mind?

I am _your mind, **Nox.** I am speaking the facts. Listen and don't bother with the opinions._

How should I know that your facts are true?

Because I am you. Listen.

You're an idiot.

Hiccup is a human. Have dragons and humans ever gotten along before?

No. They haven't.

Then what if your mother has been looking out for you all along? What if she truly set those ropes free all those months ago?

That's crazy. She's never appeared to me before. Hiccup cut those ropes.

You didn't see him do it. It could have easily been your mother doing it.

Then, why didn't she appear at all after that? What didn't she kill Hiccup?

Why did you not kill Hiccup that day, then?

Because he spared me. Because he never did anything to me.

Exactly. She never did anything to him, and thus attacking was out of the question.

Then why was she never with me before?

She cannot hold on to you forever, **Nox**. She wanted to know how you'd handle the world by yourself. But when she decided to show herself, you were already with that boyâ€¦|

Absurd. She was never there!

_Save your thoughts. Now, think of what your dear mother would say if she saw you with a _human._

She wouldâ€¦ she wouldâ€¦

She would hate you. She still loves you with all her heart, but with the acquaintance that you made, she's forced to only follow you in the shadows out of disgust. Dragons and humans don't mix. Your mother must be heartbroken, to have a spoiled dragon like you.

NO! Mother would never think like that!

And where is your proof?

Noâ€¦ She just can't, alright? She's Mother!

Open your mind, **Nox.** Think of the bigger picture. You don't know if mother has been behind you all along or not. Try out new things, like the young dragon you are.

Butâ€¦ Hiccupâ€¦

Do you want to find your mother?

Yes.

Are you willing to lose a friend for that?

â€¦

I'll let you decide on your own, then.

The voice leaves me, sending confusion and pain through my mind.

Hiccup, or mother.

Is it true that I can only choose one of them?

H

"And this is a **_G_**," I say, pointing to the last of the runes. "Got it?"

"Sorta," he says, his face borrowed in concentration.

"What do you mean, 'sorta'?" I ask, chuckling. "I'm going to write a few words and I want you to read them, alright?"

"Mm," he says. Sena is, unfortunately, not a fast learner, but he's getting there. They say that learning comes easier when you're younger.

I hear the _crunch_ of trampled leaves as Toothless enters the area.

"Toothless!" I say, getting up and greeting him.

Hiccup, he says, not looking at me in the eyes. _We need to talk._

"Can it wait?" I ask, writing down a few words for Sena, who watches us curiously.

Toothless shakes his head. _I need to talkâ€¦ now._

I nod. "Here, Sena," I say, handing over the notebook. "Try and read those, alright?"

"OK," he says, looking at the words tentatively. I look towards Toothless.

"What is it, buddy?" I ask, walking up to him and leaving Sena by the fire.

I'veâ€¦ I've been thinking for a while, Toothless says determinedly. _Maybe the reason that I can't find mother is-_

"Are you kidding, Toothless?" I ask, grinning. "We haven't even gone anywhere yet."

He paws the ground nervously.

My mother might be with me all this time, he says, staring at the ground. _But she hasn't met usâ€¦ becauseâ€¦_

"Because what, Toothless?" I ask, wondering what kind of theory this is. Dragons are huge, so we would've seen another Night Fury easilyâ€¦ especially if she's tailing Toothless.

Becauseâ€¦ she might not like humans. She might not likeâ€¦ you.

My brain goes into overdrive with shock. My mind ceases to function properly, but I manage to let out a few words of confusion:

"She might not like me?" I ask, stuttering at every syllable.

Think of it. You're riding me, on top of me, and to other dragons, it makes me look like a pet-

"But you're not a freaking _pet!_" I yell, shaking in anger. "What kind of nutjob would see me and you as human and owner? Even _Sena_ can see that we're best friends, Toothless!"

Many viewers don't have the luxury of being explained to, Toothless snaps, his tone rising.

"So? Does it matter that much?" I ask, stomping the ground in anger.

This dragon is my mother in question, he says calmly. How can he still be _calm_ after all this?!

"So, you're asking me that-"

I want you to stay away from me, for a while, Toothless says, _Just for long enough so that my mother may appear._

"You don't care about me anymore, do you?" I ask, my temper

rising.

I do, but- mother. Isn't that why we're out here, Hiccup?

"You want me out. You care about her more than you care about me."

Yes, but not like that-

His voice is fixed on one, and only one thought; getting me out of the way. For his mother.

For a mother who was never there for him.

For a mother who left her son to the wilderness.

Shaking in anger, I make forcibly make eye contact with Toothless as he looks up.

"Tell your mother to go to hell, Toothless."

****H****

Crash.

The sound of two mental connections shattering into fragments as Toothless stares at me, eyes wide and watery. I have no care for him. He doesn't want me by his side anymore, despite me being do my whole goddamn life.

Toothless turns around and runs into the woods, crashing into trees as he goes.

I stand there, processing what I just done.

I stand there, thinking about what I just said.

I stand there, and all of a sudden, I realize what happened.

I swore at Toothless. I cursed his mother. I hurt him.

No.

No.

Toothless.

I stare at the woods, my eyes searching frantically for any signs of the Night Fury, my heart sinking, shattering, plummeting to the very depths of hell itself as I understand the magnitude of my errors.

No.

No.

What did Iâ€¦| noâ€¦|

Toothlessâ€¦|

Don'tâ€| leave me, Toothlessâ€|

No.

I can'tâ€| I can't move. I'm too scared to do anything now.

I can'tâ€| I can't.

No.

Toothlessâ€|

I don't even know what to do. I slump to my knees, my head throbbing painfully in shock.

Toothlessâ€| Whatâ€|

I'mâ€|

****T****

I run through the woods as fast as I can, not bothering to ever look back, not when there is nothing else to look back to now. I feel no more inner flame, for even that has left me.

Hiccup told my mother to go to hell. He doesn't care about me anymore.

He told me that I didn't care about him anymore. That's not true.

I still care about him with all my heart. Butâ€| he doesn't. He cursed at me.

Hiccupâ€| I'm sorryâ€|

You must hate me now.

I can't let you see me again. You'll hate me even more. I'll cause you even more pain and trouble.

It would be better if he doesn't ever see me again, from now on.

I head straight towards the cliff.

I'm going to find you, mother.

****S****

Gronkles. Large and heavy. Known for their fireballs and flame. Caring and quite light hearted.

Monstrous Nightmares. Immense in size. Breathes huge amounts of fire at a time. Cocky, impulsive, and resistant to oppression.

Nadder. Spiked tails are dangerous. Colourful. Vain, but rather peaceful if not provoked.

Zippleback. Two heads the combine wits for deadly fire. Smart, but bickerish.

Night Fury. Fastest and smartest dragon known. Protective, loyal, and very caring of one.

These thoughts come into my mind as I rush towards Hiccup in his crouched down spot, exactly at the same place where he had been for over several minutes. I thought it was just a friendly conversationâ€¦ what has it become now?

"Hiccup!" I call, not getting an answer back. "Hiccup!"

"Hiccup!" I say, sitting next to him. "Hiccup!"

**Niison's** eyes look at me once, but quickly turn away and continue to stare at the ground.

"Hiccup, speak to me!" I yell, shaking his arm. "Hiccup, what's wrong?!"

With immense difficulty, he speaks up. His voice is jagged and massively low.

"I yelled at him."

"Toothless?" I ask, looking around for the big dragon.

"Yes."

Protective, loyal, and very caring of one.

If this bond between human and dragon is lostâ€¦ what happens to the care?

No.

"Hiccup, get up," I say, nudging his arm urgently. "We have to go."

"Go where? Toothless hates me now," he says. "There's no other place to go."

"He doesn't! Hiccup, listen to me!"

Hiccup's eyes peel away from the ground and turn to face me. Instantly, I'm shocked by the amount of tears there are, but I shove that thought out of my mind.

"Toothless still loves you, Hiccup. Get up. We've got to find him."

"Howâ€¦ do you know?" he asks, his words disjointed.

"Because he'd never be with you if he didn't! C'mon!"

Hiccup gives me a look of confusion, but agrees to stand up.

"There," he says, his face regaining determination but by bit. "Heâ€¦ went that way."

"Let's go, then," I say.

With Hiccup leading the trail, I follow close nearby.

Fastest dragon known.

If we're not quick, Toothless will be long gone.

But where, I don't know.

****T****

I'm standing in front of the cliff. This is it.

I can leave them all and never hurt them again. My stupidity will never again cause them harm, because they'll never get the chance to experience it.

I study the cliff carefully. Below lies nothing but water. Above holds nothing but stars.

The stars that I wished upon are gone. Only that appears are endless clouds, preparing for a storm.

I have to leave now. I can't stay hereâ€¦ I have to find mother. I'll be back for you, Hiccup, maybe.

But if you hate me, then there is no reason more me to stay no more. I'll only be a burden to you.

Spreading out my wings, I prepare for flight.

Goodbye, I say. _I'm sorry I failed to protect you all._

With the last of tears wiped away, I jump, flapping my wings as I fly through the airâ€¦

...and spin around uncontrollably.

No! I yell, my body suddenly snapping back to its senses. _The tailfin!_

I can't fly without Hiccup!

No!

The wind picks up in ferocity as I helplessly spiral down towards the water with immense speed. My wings are nothing as I uselessly flap them, my flight aimed towards the world below as I realize my stupidest mistake yet.

I have to protect Hiccup. I can't die on them now.

But it's too late.

I close my eyes as my body plunges toward the ground.

Mother.

No.

Hiccup.

Hiccup.

"TOOTHLESS!"

T

...Huh?

As my body falls towards the water below, I feel something soft land on my back. Instantly after, I feel the tailfin open again, allowing me to regain my flight once again. I flap my wings furiously, forcing my body to become upright as I miss the water by inches. My body dashes above the surface of the water, creating ripples of sonic burst and a massive wave in my wake.

I slow down, turning around and heading back for the island. That's when I take time to recognize what caused the tailfin to open suddenly.

Hiccup.

He's on my back, his face full of determination and guilt. I can sense his inner flame now, trying hard not to connect to mine. He doesn't want to talk to me. And yet, he saved my life.

Hiccupâ€¦ thank you.

We head back towards land, where Sena is beaming at us two. As soon we land, he disappears into the woods.

Hiccup slides off my back slowly, his breathing hard and hitched.

We stand there in silence, watching each other as we look into each others' eyes.

"Toothless," Hiccup begins, his voice shaking. "I want you to listen to every word I say, and I don't want to be interrupted. Is that OK?"

I nod.

"What I said back there wasn't true. I was angry at you because I thought that you didn't care about me any more," he says, looking into my eyes.

"I didn't know that you would take it so far. I'mâ€¦ I'mâ€¦"

"I'm sorry, Toothless."

I look at him in silence, just like he asked for.

"I don't know where your mother is, but if she doesn't like me, I want you to know that I'm fine by that," he says. "You're right. This is why we're on this journey, to find your mother. Everything else is considered below that."

_No, ****Mikata****. You are, _ I say, but I know he can't hear me. Yet, I continue, hoping that my returned stare will open his thoughts up to mine again. _Mother is mother. there is no one who can replace her, but there is no one who can replace you, either. If you are gone, I won't be able to do anything, less even find my mother. I want _you _to know, Hiccup, that if my mother is really behind my back just because of you, let her be. If she can't accept you, then I won't accept her. No real mother wouldn't tolerate her son's thoughts._

"Andâ€| Toothless?" he asks, his voice definitely close to tears. Something tells me that he heard all of that, but if he did, he isn't showing.

Yes? I ask, his inner flame open once more.

"If it's too much to ask forâ€| can youâ€|"

I don't even need to wait for him to finish his sentence. I walk up to him, cooing softly, and let him place his arms around my neck, pulling me into a soft embrace of two rebonded trusts, care, and love.

"Thank you," he whispers.

I won't ever leave you again, I say, my wings opening protectively as the cold rain finally begins to fall down.

Because of all the things that I can ask for, I choose the ones that I have first.

And I'm never going to let go of them.

****S****

I watch from the distance as human and dragon hug each other softly, their tears mixing together and with that, understanding. It is impossible for these two to ever break, for the longest bend possible has been now, and even now, Hiccup still managed to do the impossible, by jumping down the cliff to save Toothless. And Toothless, of all odds, forgave Hiccup. Because people are as powerful as they feel like they are, and with these feelings mixing together in unison, anything and everything is possible, as long as we have the flower known as love.

Perfect, straight, platonic love.

Below me, Toothless is licking Hiccup's head happily. Hiccup smiles, his happiness inbound once again, and before I head back to the fire, I catch a few snippets Hiccup's words as he pulls away from Toothless:

"...You really forgive me, then?... wow.

"I didn't mean to! Seriously!

"Soâ€| about the Isleâ€| Sena told me earlierâ€|

"Huh? You want to just stayâ€| like this?

"Overprotective dragon."

I grin.

I really need to find a dragon friend soon.

* * *

><p>I'm so sorry! I feel kinda unhappy with this chapter, because it doesn't advance the plot at all, and the main themes themselves are barely touched (because I just feel so exhausted . I assure you that next chapter will bring forward the plot immensely!

5. Stainless

**2 points to point out for this chapter: Niison means "respected brother", and H/T/S stand for different POVs, or a time break, if the same letter appears twice in a row.
>

* * *

><p>The rain keeps us on the island for a few days. Despite Toothless's urges to take me into the skies again (for reasons only Odin knows), we all stay grounded until the torrential storms decide to cede their torment. It's almost as if the weather goes by Toothless's mood, his happiness affecting the way the climate goes. Rain could mean anger or depression, whereas clear skies could mean happiness, if Night Furies are that powerful.<p>

Something, of course, tells me that they are.

One morning after the rain has stopped, I'm awoken to the sound of restless growling, and it's not my stomach. It's Toothless.

I try to open my eyes, but there is something covering them, disallowing me from gaining sight in any way.

"And I thought that I was supposed to get up early," I think. I can hear the shuffling of feet, the crooning of a dragon, and even some clanging of metal.

Just a bit more Toothless thinks, cooing at something.

"Toothless?" I think, trying to move my arms and legs. I can't.

H-Hiccup! Y-you're awake! Toothless says, surprised. He growls a bit more, his breathing rather uneven. He seems shocked to know that I'm awake.

"Yes, I am," I think, mentally rolling my eyes, since I really can't do that in real life with a cloth binded to my head so tightly. "What the hell is going on?"

Um, yeah! You are! Toothless says. I can hear whimpers from outside

my vision. I notice he doesn't answer my second question.

Unfortunately, that's not saying much anyway.

"I don't suppose you put this on me, did you?" I say, my mouth still gratefully spared from the bindings, but I still feel my feet and arms rooted straight to the ground by something heavy.

Umâ€| he says uneasily.

"Toothless," I say exasperatedly. "What is wrong?"

Ehâ€| nothing! Nothing at all!_ Toothless says anxiously, and in the distance I hear a chuckle of a boy.

Sena.

"Sena," I call. "Can you hear me?"

"Um, yes?" he answers carefully, and the sound of clanging metal hastens.

"What's wrong with- mmph! Urrrgn!" I try to say, only to have a huge backpack shoved at my mouth.

Somewhere around me, I hear the warble of a dragon.

"Oh, so this is what I get?" I think, trying to not sound desperate. "For not flying with y-"

A _really_ loud growl silences me and I immediately regret my choice of words before.

We're almost done, Toothless says, cooing slightly.

We?

After some more clangs of metal and more shuffling of cloth, my arms and legs are freed from their prison, the blindfold covering me finally lifted away by a pair of soft hands. Immediately, I open my eyes immediately, glaring fiercely at them both.

"Sena? What the h-" I begin, but I am once again silenced, this time from shock.

In front of me, held in Toothless's smiling mouth, is a metal, shiny, and very _new_ prosthetic leg.

Thought that we'd help prepare you for the road ahead, Toothless says, cooing softly.

I glance down at my own prosthetic, seeing its tattered and rusted parts. It's also sort of clanky now, being much more louder than before, signalling the end of its perfectness.

Then I look back towards the new prosthetic, Toothless's smile apparent through the metal.

"Heyâ€| thanks," I say. Toothless warbles and sets the prosthetic

down at my leg, removing the mass of bags that were immobilizing me recently. I slowly remove my old artificial leg, its coldness on my stumped leg gone the moment I rid myself of it.

"No sweat," Sena says, grinning from ear to ear. "It took a while for us to go through all of those plans and everything."

"Plans?" I say, looking confusedly at them, ceasing my actions in putting on the new leg.

That's when I see one of my notebooks sprawled out on the ground, several metal parts and hammers surrounding it.

"_Sena!_" I snap, getting up out of sudden anger. "After what I told you-"

Without the prosthetic on my foot, though, I lose my balance and fall over.

Toothless catches me as I fall, letting me hold onto him for support as I hastily fall back towards the log.

"Geez, it has a lot ofâ€¦" I say futilely.

Sena gives me an apologetic look.

"Wellâ€¦ you weren't really up this morning, so I took the opportunity toâ€¦ _look_ at your notebook," he says, smiling guiltily. "I saw the prosthetic model, andâ€¦ I showed it to Toothless."

Toothless coos softly.

We got to work as fast as we can, he explains, grinning. _We wanted to surprise you._

I glance at them two, their smiling faces, and then I look back at my notebook. Their smiles, their intentions, and them themselves, and my notebook. I have to admit, my privacy is theirs as well, seeing we're all in this thing together.

"And what debt do I owe you two that requires being violated of my privacy in return for something this awesome?" I ask, rolling my eyes. I don't really want to appreciate Sena for looking into my personal entries, but with something this cool (and his normally playful attitude), it's not really easy to stay mad at him for so long.

Toothless snorts, and it's Sena who speaks up.

"I wanted to thank you for, you know, saving my life-"

"So, I wasn't supposed to?" I snap, interrupting him, but grinning nonetheless.

"You had a choice, and you took it," he points up. "So this is my choice."

I look down at the prosthetic. Under the sunlight, it glimmers with the soft sparkle that metal usually gives off.

Except, when I touch it, it doesn't feel really cold. It feels slightly heavier, but that's supposed to be the increased size of the thing.

"Is this metal?" I ask, looking at it with interest.

It's something like that, he says, urging me to put it on. _Except it doesn't rust._

I stare at the metal, my mind racing to find logic in his words.

"It doesn't _rust?_" I ask, picking it up and looking at its silvery and shiny texture.

"Toothless accidentally burned a piece of metal with his fire," Sena says, pointing to a patch of scorched ground not far off. "I tried to dose the thing with water, but it just slid off like it was nothing. There haven't been any rust signs yet."

"Neat," I say, putting the prosthetic on. "Should we name this kind of metal?"

"Sure," Sena says, reaching out a hand to help me up. I sturdily walk, the new prosthetic now fitting my growing leg, the light bouncing off it dancing like fire. Toothless looks at these lights curiously, but doesn't move.

"How aboutâ€¦|" I say, looking around for anything that might give me an idea of a good name.

My eyes lock on Toothless's, his eyes focused on mine.

"_Inox._"

His ears perk up at the name, growling slightly.

Why would you name a metal after me? Toothless asks.

"Because _you_ were the one who discovered it," I say, patting his snout. "It's only fair that this metal belongs to you."

Toothless looks at me appreciatively, cooing softly as he licks my hand.

Minox? he asks, eyes wide in anticipation.

I smile, but don't answer him. He knows very well what I'm thinking. _Mikata. Nox._

"Minox," I whisper.

"Speaking of which, it could make a lot of trade, too," Sena says from behind.

We both turn to face him, our faces tilted in curiosity.

"This thing can make _trade?_" I say, holding up a broken piece of _Minox_ that must have been of a prototype's.

"Yes," he says, holding up another piece excitedly. "My village's ships were sailing past a trading port up north, called ****_Halla_****. It's a large place where traders from all over the land come to trade."

"Hey, that sounds a lot like a place where Trader Johann would go to," I say.

Johann? You mean that cowardly sea merchant? Toothless asks, cooing. I shoot him a glare.

"Yeah, maybe like someone like that," Sena says. "Since my parents passed it while going south, it should be north of here and all."

"That's true," I say, walking to pick up the notebook. I flip through it quickly, trying to remember what he found out from my darkest secrets.

"I didn't look at any of the pictures," Sena says loudly, and I blush heavily. Toothless snorts.

"Give me a break," I say, snapping the notebook shut, my eyes looking daggers at him.

"Aw, I was just kidding!" Sena says.

"I just hope you are," I snap, not caring to hide my irritation at this most recent violation of stored feelings.

"No! Really!" he says, running up to me and giving me a hug. Toothless watches as Sena throw his arms around me, his head resting on my shoulder happily, cuddling softly at my tunic.

Toothless also laughs at my awkwardness, because Sena obviously doesn't feel any.

"Uh... I thought you disliked physical contact," I say, trying to rid of the awkwardness.

"Hey, I can learn too," he says, pulling away from me. "I care, see?"

"Why do you remind me of some nearby reptile?" I mutter, earning a grin from Toothless.

I bail out for food before Toothless can come up and give me a hug too.

****H****

As the two of us eat (Sena didn't eat in the early morning, and Toothless will get his food when we're at sea), sitting in a circle on the grass, I see Toothless burning more and more metal. Apparently, the metal pieces that I brought work just perfectly with Toothless's fire.

"How much food do you have left?" Sena asks, eyeing the food packs questioningly.

"For me, it's about half a week, and for Toothless, it'll be half a day," I say. Toothless snorts.

"That sounds fair enough," Sena jokes. His slightly yellowed teeth reminds me of the povert life he once had before, so it would come to his question to know how much he could eat.

"How much did you use to eat before you met us?" I ask, trying to avoid the stronger variant of the question.

"Just enough to get by," Sena says rather off-handedly.

I can tell that he's lying, but because he's lying, I don't pursue the subject.

"Seems good enough," I say, taking a bite into my slice of bread.

"What's the plan, then?" Sena asks, looking at me as if I am some authoritative figure.

"Umâ€¦ maybe you should ask Toothlessâ€¦" I say, glancing towards him nervously, but Toothless just gives me a Toothless grin and goes back to scorching the alloys.

I look back at Sena, who is still giving me that reverent look. I wonder what that it means for a while until I notice Toothless's grin.

He's looking up to me for directions.

Sena respects me. As a leader. As a brother.

"Senaâ€¦" I say, trying to get the words out and hoping they will not lead to failure.

"Yes?" he says, gnawing away at the stale bread from my backpack.

I look at that bread, then at Sena. At his yellowed teeth, at his poverty.

"We're leaving right after breakfast," I tell him, quickly downing the rest of the food.

"Like, _now?_" he asks, his eyes widening excitedly.

"Yes," I say, standing up.

We'll sell this new metal and trade it for better bread, I think.

He smiles, getting up too, the bread in his hands.

"Ready for another flight, Toothless?" I ask the Night Fury. He finishes burning the last of the Minox and looks up eagerly.

You can bet my other tailfin that I am, he says, smiling.

****T****

It takes several more minutes of packing before we're actually in the air, but when we are, all of us are in high spirits, fueled by our new determination to find this trading port and the wind that blows through the fiery faces of ours.

"Who knows?" Hiccup says, patting my side gently. "This may lead us straight towards your mother."

More like a great excuse to see the world, I say, rolling my eyes. Hiccup laughs.

It's true that this flight isn't really aimed towards finding my mother, but with a trade port that holds so many people, there's got to be _someone_ who knows about the Isle of Night. Freaking trading city must contain the North's greatest merchants and travellers, a place that I can only fantasize about (which is not that often, seeing that I fantasize about Stormfly more). I only learn about the sea boundaries that I pass, and I'm taking in more and more information by the moment.

"What a nice feeling," Sena says breathlessly. "Flying in the air."

Sena doesn't prove to feel all that scared of flying, seeing as he experienced it before, but I can still feel his initial nervousness as he grips Hiccup's shoulders tightly.

"It's the _best_ kind of feeling," _Mikata_ says, grinning. "You feel free, happy, and satisfied all at the same time."

We dart over a large school of fish. Immediately, I fire a firebolt into it, causing the fish to fly up into the air. When they come down, I eat them up hungrily, last night's food not quite satisfying enough for the ravenous stomach of the Night Fury. Hiccup grabs a few and stuffs them into his bag, slinging it on the saddle for keeping.

I sort of wonder about that saddle sometimes. Hiccup says that he needs it to be able to stay on top of me during flights, but I think it's more related to the prosthetic and its controlling. Without the saddle, he wouldn't be able to net the mechanism properly, and we wouldn't be able to fly.

I really don't mind about it, because if none of us (you know, me, Hiccup, and maybe Stormfly) actually care about what this contraption makes me look like, we can appreciate its use and the symbolism it has.

Because, no matter how much this saddle makes me look like a pet, if Hiccup doesn't care, who am I to do so?

I nab a fish toothlessly, letting Hiccup take it and adding it to the already extensive amount of bony creatures.

"Well, it looks like lunch is secured now," he says, chuckling.

I warble in delight. Hiccup rubs one of my ears.

No kidding, I say. _If there's any spares, we can always sell it

for extras._

"Yeah, right, because a _port_ city will have no fish at all," he says, laughing.

I warble. _I_ told _you_ that you're smarter than me,_ I say.

"Shut up," he says. "Saying that only makes you smarter."

I'm about to do a loop of delight through the air when I feel Sena cringing in fear.

"It's alright," Hiccup says, letting Sena hug him around the neck. "He's pretty used to this kind of stuff. You won't fall off."

Except if I let you intentionally, I remark. Hiccup laughs and Sena loosens his grip slightly, relaxing.

"The perks of having not one, not two, but _three_ sets of wings," Sena says observantly, grinning.

I warble, opening my wings wide and diving straight towards the water instead.

"Whoa!" Sena says, this time full-on throwing his arms on Hiccup's waist as he whimpers slightly.

Don't let Astrid see this, I joke, plummeting towards the clear water below.

"I heard that!" Hiccup says, but he laughs as well.

"W-what did he say?" Sena says, clutching on to Hiccup for life (or, at least what he thinks would take his life) as I pull up, the shadow of me reflecting perfectly from the water into the sky.

"Something stupid," Hiccup says, and I growl playfully.

I heard that too, I say, hitting him with one of my ears.

"Ow! Sorryâ€¦" Hiccup says, retracting his hand back and shaking it. I coo softly.

I didn't mean it to be that hard, I say, guilt settling in somehow.

"Aw, c'mon now," he says, rubbing my head as we fly through the sky at a mediumish speed. "Do I look like I care that you hit me?"

Yes, I say, whimpering.

"What's wrong with Toothless?" Sena asks suddenly. He's back to holding on to Hiccup's shoulders.

"He's irritated and wants to hit me," Hiccup jokes. I narrow my eyes immediately.

I clamp my mouth shut, trying hard not to scorch this scrawny

Maldrit with my flames, just to scare him, for those flames don't really harm him anyway.

The perks of being immortal.

"Does he?" the younger boy asks, grinning. "Maybe I should help him."

"What?!" Hiccup says, shocked at his supposed brother's words.

_Good one, _I warble, even if he can't hear me.

"Just kidding," Sena says. "But you should let Toothless hit you. If he's irritated, he might not regurgitate another fish for you."

At this, I immediately look into Hiccup's thoughts, knowing that he's occupied with thinking about how Sena knows this sensitive piece of information.

"_The diary! Dammit!_" Hiccup thinks. I laugh.

"I heard that," Hiccup says, rolling his eyes.

_I know, _I say, grinning. Hiccup gives me a groan.

"You two sound like an old couple of lovebirds," Sena jokes.

"Shut up," we both say, and then laugh.

I might feel guilty that I'm annoying Hiccup, but as friends, tolerance is a sign of how powerful your friendship truly is.

****S****

Hiccup seems to fall asleep just after I get up, his chest laying softly on Toothless's back, who is gliding softly through the mix of clouds and haze, and I can see him _smiling_. I've heard of people smiling in their sleep, but why is something that I really want to know. Do _I_ smile when I sleep? I have to let Hiccup watch me, I guess.

Hiccup's foot is locked in the mechanism, the tailfin spread wide, to which I can only guess that to be Toothless's 'autopilot' mode, where he has limited independent control over his flight. He can turn, he can rise and dive, but only slowly and steadily. It's awesome. Hiccup trusts Toothless that he will go the right way, and Toothless trusts Hiccup to not move the position as they soar (despite Hiccup's innate clumsiness).

Hiccup's and Toothless's communication is something that fascinates me, you know. How they can speak to each other through their minds, or even alone their care and trust, is so cool and worth looking up to. Plus, he finds a dragon, but instead of calling him a pet, like so many people would, becomes his the best friend and eventually take down the Red Death, ending all the dragon raids for good. I mean, after hearing Hiccup saying that, you just get this idea that Hiccup is this superpower guy, who fights evil and brings justice with force and a loyal dragon. But he isn't like that. He's just a normal guy like us, and he's _cool_.

Besides, no superpower person could compare to the friendship that he has.

After a while, I touch Toothless gently with my hand. He coos in response.

"Are we nearly there yet?" I ask, even though he probably doesn't know.

To my surprise, he shoots a firebolt straight forward, exploding not a far distance away.

"Close?" I ask. Toothless nods.

Well, that's a huge relief. I was thinking, for a moment, that we'd have to find some island to rest on (and, since I've woken up, I've seen none).

Several minutes later, the port city comes into view.

"Hey!" I call, shaking Hiccup slightly. "There it is!"

"Huhâ€|" Hiccup says sleepily. "We're thereâ€|?"

"We are," I say, but I can guess that Toothless has already told him that.

The city is behind a large cliff, making us shocked at first at its initial closeness.

"Whoa," Hiccup says.

The port is lined to the inch with ships, their metal chains preventing them from leaving without their owner's consent, the ensuing market above full of people trading, talking, yelling, even fighting. Beyond that, rows upon rows of houses are built haphazardly, households, bars, hotels, all built in a huge semicircle around the market, surrounding the place and blocking off the rest of the fertile land beyond that. We're still rather far away from the port, but close enough to the outlying houses when we land at the feet of the cliff. It's a wonder how Hiccup doesn't know of this place. It's huge.

As soon as we're off Toothless's back, Toothless beckons Hiccup (and, to an extent, me) to go.

"What?" I ask wonderingly. "Why can't Toothless go?"

"The people of the town would be shocked to see a dragon," Hiccup explains. "The raids may have stopped, but it's not like the hate they have will go away anytime soon."

I nod quietly, realizing my naiveness.

"Where will you stay? Where will we stay?" I ask, looking around.

Toothless purrs towards a small cave at the bottom of the cliff. It looks empty (and large) enough to be able to hold three beings.

"I guess we should bring some of this along," **_Niison_** says, picking up a small piece of Minox, as Hiccup called it earlier that day.

"For what?" I ask, looking at the, forgive me, miserable piece of metal. "That can't possibly even be big enough for parchment weight."

"For proving, actually," Hiccup says. "It takes a while for real metal to rust."

"Oh," I say. "That sounds reasonable."

Toothless heads into the cave as we wave him good-bye, even if we'll be here by the end of the day anyway.

"Hey, Hiccup, how do you talk to Toothless like that?" I ask as we walk through the small forestation between the houses and the cliff.

"We were playing around one day, and it just happened," Hiccup says happily, the new prosthetic making silent motions on the grass. "We found out how to communicate by accident, and everything took off after that."

"Like what?" I ask, not understanding Hiccup's notions of 'everything'.

"You don't know yet?" he asks, chuckling. "I thought that notebook told you everything."

"It wasn't in that notebook," I admit. Hiccup has the grace to not glare at me.

"Wellâ€¦ I'm immortal," Hiccup says, and I round on the spot in surprise.

"_What?_" I ask, hastily moving on forwards through the trees despite my shock.

"Toothless wanted me to stay, and I wanted him to stay, so we sortaâ€¦ became one," he says thoughtfully. "I passed through the Night Fury flames andâ€¦ yeah. I only die when Toothless does."

I stare at him in shock and nearly walk into a tree. I mean, Hiccup shoved his hand in the way before I could.

"You- can't die?" I ask, admiration for him heightening even further.

"Well, I guess I still can," he says. "But by natural causes, I die when Toothless does."

"Wow! That means you'll still be young and everything when I grow old!" I say, but Hiccup glares at me.

"What? Isn't that g..." I trail my voice off in fear that I angered Hiccup. Maybe he isn't happy with being immortal.

His expression takes a while to clear up, but when he does, he's smiling.

"I'm glad that you're thinking of your future," he says. "I wish everyone I knew could be immortal too, butâ€¦"

"You gotta pick what you get," I say. Hiccup looks at me, confused.

And then he runs into a tree.

"Ahh! Sorry!" I say, holding his shoulders as he presses a hand against his head.

"Should've given me a warning," he says. I smile guiltily.

"I'll make it up at the town, alright?" I offer. "I'll be super careful of you."

"Why does everyone around me become super protective of me?" he mutters, and I'm tempted to answer him, but I don't.

****H****

As we near the market, passing through the houses and bars that are also packed with people, I can see the sun in its waning phase now, signalling us to hurry.

"The town market is huge," I mutter. "How are we supposed to show the people our metal?"

"The town market has a square, you know," Sena says, pointing to the mass congregation of people. "We could show them there."

"I guess, so, but-" I begin.

"Ah! Sena!" a name shouts, causing both of us to turn.

A large man, about in his forties, with slightly charred skin and brown hair and beard, walks towards Sena in delight.

"Hi, Governor," Sena says shyly. I can tell that he isn't really comfortable being around this guy.

"I thought your ships had passed by already! Did you forget to sell us something?" he asks, holding out a hand to shake. Sena accepts the coarse, scarred hand uneasily, but the Governor seems to be concerned about other things.

"I haven't got much to trade for," he says, but then looks at me. "But my friend here does."

I feel a strong rush of gratitude towards Sena. He has, in the very sense of the words, secured a place for this silvery metal, and with it, our time here.

"Oh! You mean this fine gentlemen with you?" he asks, looking at me. I can sense his eyes on my prosthetic, but I don't say anything.

"Yes," I say, holding out my hand and showing the metal. "It's called Minox."

"_Unrustable_ metal," Sena adds in before the Governor can say anything.

"Unrustable?" the man says, taking the Minox and looking at it carefully. "It sure looks different from the normal metals that we've seen before. But it won't _rust?_"

"No, it won't," I say confidently.

"Put it in a container in the middle of the square," Sena says. "By tomorrow, and forever, it's never going to rust."

The Governor looks at me, then at Sena. From what I can guess, Sena's village is rather well-trusted here, by the way the man's eyes don't contract.

"I shall take your word," he says. "Do you want to show it to the town?"

"Yes, please," Sena says, but he's thinking "_Just do it._"

"Excellent! A fine new addition to our town!" the Governor asks happily. "Do you have any more?"

"We have a large supply back where we live," I say confidently, which is halfway truthful. As long as we can find more metal, we can always let Toothless help us make more.

"Oh, simply _marvelous_!" he says, shaking my hand, even if I didn't reach it out. "This will be _perfect_ for the market! You could make loads off of these, you know. People have never seen this kind of thing before, so there's no price for this thing yet."

"Is that so?" I say, trying to get things moving along.

"Yes!" the man says. "Several months ago, we had a guy who brought spices and even books from the other side of the world. Made a fortune. His ship was trembling from the weight of the all the lots he got when he finally left."

Johann, I think. _He must know this place._

"That's cool," Sena says. "Can we take a look around your market for a while?"

The man beams. "Why, of course! Do what you like here! Make some new freinds! Your village offers us the _best_ leather coats," he says, patting his long, brown coat. "Like _this_ one!"

I can see Sena rolling his eyes, but the Governor doesn't.

After a quick tour of the market, where we see people selling swords, meat, fish, wool, and all that stuff, where Sena does not talk at all, we quickly head straight back towards the cave. On our way back, I see lots of people at the square, looking at a large, wet container set in the middle, a large sign saying INOX- UNRUSTABLE METAL-

HALLA'S LATEST CIRCULATION!

"I don't like that man a lot," Sena says.

"I can see that," I say. "Why?"

"Heâ€ he likes me only because of my village," he says. "Not because of me."

Quick as he is to make a plausible excuse, I can tell that he's lying. The inner flame is pretty observant on this kind of stuff.

Of course, I don't ask him why.

"People are weird," I say. "Like the work, not the personality."

"Yeah," he says. "You're not like that."

I smile, my face lighting up as he says so.

"That's why you're my friend," I say, smiling.

****H****

We reach the cave in good time. I can see that Toothless has disguised the mouth of the cave to make it look like part of the cliff above, so we won't get unwanted visitors. After quickly having dinner (Sena is still on stale bread, but I swear, I'm going get rid of all that tomorrow), we flop down on the mouth's cave, Toothless by my side soundly as Sena sits beside me. We talk a bit, but it's mostly eating and complaining about sleep.

After lying beside the couch for a good ten minutes, Sena falls asleep, his arms around my neck, his head resting softly on my shoulder. I can relate this feeling to not Astrid's lovely hug as we flew through the sky that day, but instead the warm happiness of Toothless as he hugged me all those times before. I miss the former badly, wanting to see Astrid again, but I feel like there are so many things that I also feel happy with. Sena's brotherlike care, Toothless's immortal trust- all of these can't be compared to the lustful desires of mine when it comes to a certain someone. Platoncity is the most reliable type of love, because you don't really give a Loki about what's going to happen, because you know that that person will be there with you regardless.

"Toothless?" I mentally ask, and his ears perk up instantly, despite my thoughts being, you know, thoughts, and not verbal sounds.

Yes? Toothless asks, his thoughts as clear as the setting sky outside itself.

"Can do you me a favor?" I ask, my mind determined to stay on track.

Sure, he says. _What is it?_

"Can you look into my mind for a moment?" I ask.

Toothless's head tilts in surprise, but he makes no sound,

understanding that I want this conversation to be between us.

Alright, he says, his face concentrated. I feel the breathing of Toothless in my mind, his heartbeats at a nonphysical exertion rate, his thoughts full of inquiry and care.

"Am I happy, Toothless?" I ask, my face hanging down.

What? Toothless asks, letting out a croon by accident.
Wellâ€¦|_

"You're with me, Sena's with me," I think. "I'm glad that you guys are looking out for me. But do I deserve to have all this?"

Of course you deserve this, Toothless says, but I don't feel confused. _Why do you think not?_

"Because I don't think like I've really done anything to you guys," I say, my eyes closed. "All I have made for you is trouble. You nearly died, and it was all my fault."

Hiccupâ€¦|_

"I let you make all these great things for me, like the prosthetic, and yet I've never repaid you at all. Think of it; what have I done for you, recently?"

You've been the best friend I've ever met.

"So have you," I think dejectedly. "But you've done more. You gave me protection. You gave me life. Youâ€¦| you have every right to hurt me, actually, because I don't know how I'd repay you after all you've done."

Butâ€¦|haven't you given me a lot as well?

"What does that matter?" I think, water close to escaping my eyes. "I hurt you nearly every day, and yet you don't seem to mind at all. So it should be right of me to not mind what you guys throw at meâ€¦| right?"

I know that you mind, butâ€¦| I thought you didn't keep it in like this.

"And Sena, too. We've barely known him for a week and he's already a great friend of mine," I think. I feel that it is OK to call Sena 'my' friend, because he won't mind, and deep his care his, he doesn't have the power of reducing me to tears like Toothless does. "He can make me laugh and smile, and he's provided so much about the Isle of Night. What am I going to do to help him back?"

We are_ helping him,_ Toothless reminds me. _We're taking him back to his village._

"I know," I think, clamping my head in frustration. "It's justâ€¦| he's so happy all the time. Am I happy, Toothless?"

You don't seem very happy now, but you usually are, he says reassuringly.

"How am I supposed to be happy, when I can't repay for what you've done to me?" I think. "How do I rest, knowing that you vouch over me each night, not getting any sleep at all?"

Iâ€|

"I know that you still do that, Toothless. What do you think I should do to repay you?"

Toothless considers something for a second, then mentally speaks up again.

Smile.

"Huh?" I ask, not understanding his advice.

Smile.

"Iâ€| why?"

Smile.

"...Alright..." I think, and with the most possible force that I have, I smile.

Instantly, the world feels so much brighter. I am not a sad boy with a dragon, but a soul full of fire that looks into the everlasting sky with him. I feel not sad anymore, butâ€| happy.

While I ponder about the incredibility of emotion change just by _smiling_, Toothless sings me a little melody.

Are you happy now? Toothless asks. I nod.

"...Yes," I say, smiling slightly. "Butâ€| youâ€| your repayâ€|"

Hiccup, when you smile, my world lights up like nothing before. When you're happy, when your inner flame is active and enthusiastic, I feel that my own heart is at one with you. When you're down, so am I. Thus, with your smiles, your humorous remarks, your tolerance of all things, you make me live. You can give me a new prosthetic for me, you can hug me every night, you can go and fish out all the fish in the sea for me, and it still wouldn't make me as happy as just seeing you smile and enjoy life.

I fall silent, my inner flame joining his as I slowly understand his powerful words.

He doesn't need me to repay him anything. He does these things for me because it makes him happy.

And, in indifference, he too wants me to be happy.

I slowly let a tear fall to the floor.

"I'm sorry I've been so stupid, Toothless."

We can all be, Toothless says, nodding. _Even I._

"I justâ€¦ I still think that I'm not giving Sena enough," I say, the only thing keeping my mind at bay.

And, at that moment, Sena stirs slowly, his yawning signaling his awakening.

"Nnâ€¦. *_Niison_*â€¦" he says, getting up slowly. "Are you there?"

I turn around, seeing him wipe his eyes and notice a little drool from the corner of his mouth. I wipe it away, causing Sena to look at me curiously.

"I'm right here," I say, and it's now that I realize that what I was looking for, I had all along. "Go back to sleep."

"Alrightâ€¦" he says feebly, his head once again on my shoulder.

The reason why I smile.

I don't need to find something to give them back.

I am already with them, and with them is where they are happy.

And so am I.

* * *

><p>This chapter may seem somewhat less feelish than the last ones, but it's for the sake of going through the plot. And I rushed through the market scene entirely. I hope I didn't disappoint you guys.

Glossary:

Povert- to have poverty.

**_Binded-_ Bind. It should be a word, but it isn't.
**

Unrustable- Cannot be rusted.

**Inox-**** A French word for Stainless Steel.**

The song's name is called Smile by Avril Lavinge. It's not here anymore, but you should check it out anyway.

**Finally, on an unrelated note, none of my cover pictures are original. I am a terrible artist. = **

6. Tunics

In case you're wondering, Hiccup is a young, learning boy with the ability to swim pretty well, despite that leg.

* * *

><p>I'm the first to wake up this morning.<p>

As I open my eyes to the sound of the chirping birds, I see Toothless and Sena still asleep soundly on either side of me. Sena's mouth is still drooling slightly, whereas Toothless is crouched on the ground, his snout rising and falling slightly as he breathes. I push Sena off me gently, leaning his head against the cave wall. He grunts slightly, but otherwise goes back to sleeping peacefully.

I beam at them both as I get up and face them. They just look so happy, so carefree. They could sleep here forever, and the sun would stay at this position, and the birds would still chirp their chirpy melodies, the flowers giving off their morning scent, the land and world in the ever perfect state, and they wouldn't need to care to even appreciate it all. They're asleep, where the world inside them matters the most, the world that even I would have little access to.

I slowly sit down, careful not to step on any sticks or rocks as to not wake them up, and pull out my notebook (which I keep in my tunic at all times now), brandishing a charcoal pen from my bag when I can't find any in my clothes.

I trace the outlines of Toothless first, then Sena, then the cave wall. I draw the sun's rays as they shine in slowly onto their faces, then slowly draw them artfully one-by-one. Toothless's face is facing down, his head on his front paws, his eyes shut and closed tight, his wings kept on either side of him for warmth against the somewhat autumn-ish days of the year, his tail stretched out from beneath the wing and in front of him, the prosthetic lying somewhat half-closed in his position.

Sena's chest rises and falls throughout the course of the drawing, his legs sprawled out in front of him, the arms falling to either side of him, his head lying against the cave wall. His black hair, untidy as it is, blows slightly with the wind that passes by, his (my) tunic stained slightly by mud and sweat. He must have done a good of that prosthetic, to be soâ€| ragged in clothes.

That's when I get a brilliant idea. Why not do the washing? I could just take off Toothless's prosthetic, slip off Sena's tunic, and go wash the clothes, and leave them to dry and give Sena a new tunic (I have three in total). I'm not the best washer in history, but least he'd have something presentable to wear while trading today.

Speaking of which, the sun hardly even up. This really must be the first rays of dawn, because I can't see them waking up anytime soon.

To be sure, I poke into their minds a little bit. Even if Sena doesn't have the power of Night Fury flames, his care should be enough for me to sense his sleepfulness.

Snore. Snow. Minox? is what I hear in Sena's dreams. He's not going to wake up anytime soon, that's for sure.

I look into Toothless's next.

Ah! Stormfly! There! Th-

I jump back in shock, my face blushing a deep maroon red as I try to process what I've just heard- and felt.

"Give me a freaking break," I mutter, discarding the thoughts as fast as I can.

Suddenly, Toothless snorts loudly in irritation, throwing his head to the side in annoyance.

I'm screwed, I'm screwed. Toothless will never forgive me of what I heard.

I catch my breath, praying with all my might that he won't throw me into the sea or something.

Instead, he coos slightly and goes straight back to his sleeping position, his snoring resuming its original pace.

"I'll never understand Night Furies," I mutter, which is, of course, not exactly truthful.

Except for the one thought: why freaking Stormfly? Vain, annoying, and just stupid like Aâ€| nevermind. He might as well turn into a Monstrous Nightmare and court one of those. Oh, wait. He hates Hookfangâ€| but, hey. That would make for a good story.

Racking my head to get back on track, I slowly move over and slip Sena's tunic off his body. I have to move his head up a bit cutting off his supply of air momentarily, but he doesn't show any sign of stirring. He's wearing a ragged, brown undershirt underneath, above a black pair of pants, and after seeing their dirtied states, I vow to get him new sets of those for him too. They might not be as important as, you know, tunics, but they're clothes too.

After a moment's hesitation, I slowly slide off the leather part of Toothless's prosthetic. It comes off fairly easy as well. Interestingly, he doesn't stir. Which is, well, good.

More time for me to get these things done.

I march off towards the nearby coast, which is also conveniently right under the cliff, and set down the things for washing. That is, in general, a tailfin and 2 tunics (mine as well).

I slip off my tunic, revealing a green shirt underneath and the thankfulness towards Odin that Astrid isn't here to see me. I mean, would she ever like me in my fishbone stature?

No.

I dip Sena's tunic into the water bottom first, the stains and mud rushing off like sand off leaves and dissipating into the water. I rinse it several times more, repeating the process over and over until I see a few stubborn stains that just refuse to leave.

"Water isn't going to be enough for these," I mutter, setting the clothes on the grassy ground and grabbing some dead grass on the ground. At least these will provide some friction.

I dip the clothes into the water again, and scrub away at the stubborn stains with the grass. The smudges seem to dissipate, but not all of it is gone. I sigh.

"Let's try handworksâ€|" I mutter, rubbing two portions of the tunic together. As if by a miracle, the clothes look brand new instantly, no blotches or tints of mire left. I stare in awe at my own discovery, and quickly grab my own tunic and getting to work with it.

Sena is going to love this. And Toothless too, once I get around with the heavy leather. It'll be good to do something for them for a change, not just letting them treat me like a god while I just sit around and stupidly ask myself why. Actions speak louder than words.

The two tunics lay side by side on the ground, their surfaces being dried slowly by the sun. I give them a little shake to speed up the process. At this rate, it's only going to be dry on one side, and that's if the sun shines, for like, all day.

I reach for a nearby stick and shove it into the ground. I find a small log and prop that up, too. I could hang these clothes, actuallyâ€|

With some difficulty, I remove my prosthetic and brace it up as well. I pull up the stick from the ground and place it on top of the two columns above the ground. Sena's tunic is placed on the far left side of the stick, one side hanging down enough for the other side to stay there affixed there in an open (and hanging-by-the-mouth) envelope-like position. Mine follows on the right side. Now I can hang the clothes and I'll get both sides done.

"Whew! So this is how normal people do itâ€|" I mutter.

I'm just done Toothless's leathery, but also easy-to-wash prosthetic tailfin when I decide to wash my undershirt as well. It probably won't hurt to do that, seeing the rest are asleep and even if they weren't, they probably wouldn't care (except maybe for blackmail). The pants don't come off though, seeing as they're not in a bad state and I have spares.

Yep, Astrid would scream if she saw this.

I look at my own body- scrawny, thin, and horribly disproportionate because of the now-missing leg. My body smells slightly, which further gives me a reason to bathe. I stay upright on one leg, being sort of used to it after a while (after, well, someone stole my prosthetic for several days as a joke).

I'm about to jump in, of course, when fate decides that I shouldn't be the one to control my timing in jumping into the water. A pair of soft hands push at my back, causing me to lose balance and fall into the water. Behind me, just before I tumble, I hear the laugh of a boy.

Ofâ€| oh, great. The second last person on Yggdrasil that I want blackmailing me.

I feel the cold water seep into my skin, the tickle of the nerves as

my body adjusts to this new, but old feeling tingling through my body playfully as I manage to rise up to the surface, despite having only one leg for support. All Berkians are taught how to swim at a young age, mainly because our main resource of food is, you guessed it, fish.

Still, that doesn't stop me from getting up and glaring at Sena, who has just turned back around from shouting towards the cave.

"What were you thinking?!" I begin to say, spluttering with water.

"Toothless was worried sick," he says, smiling. "But he isn't now. He's gone back to sleeping now, I think. He looked pretty preoccupied with something."

I roll my eyes, knowing what Toothless is 'preoccupied' with, but I have to admire him, too. It takes a lot for Toothless to let go of me like that, I tell you. Sena must be well-trusted by Toothless. But he's definitely going to pay for this.

"You-" I say, but before I can verbalise much more, he strips off his undershirt, tossing it onto the grass, and jumps in as well.

"Sena!" I say, watching as he goes in and comes up almost right afterwards, smiling madly.

"Hey, you washed that tunic for me, did you?" he asks, beaming. "Thanks a lot."

"I would have thanked you for a lot of things if you let me in myself," I mutter. He laughs.

"Hey, how do you stay afloat with only one leg?" he asks, pointing at my leg curiously. "I have two whole legs and I can't even swim properly."

"You can't?" I say, raising an eyebrow skeptically. "For a boy like you-"

"Can you teach me?" he asks excitedly. "I can only stay up like this, but I can't even do a normal stroke. **_Kru_**?"

"**_Kru?_**" I ask, scratching my head in confusion.

"Yeah," he says, legs kicking slowly underneath him. "I told Toothless that too, and it looked like he understood. My village must know some Dragonese words, if not intentionally."

"Interesting," I say, swimming towards him. "C'mon, I'll show you how to swim properly."

"Sure," he says. I beckon him to grip my shoulder as I let him float on his own.

"We'll start with the backstroke, alright?" I say, supporting him up as he slowly lets himself float belly-up, my hand on his back as he legs go off my shoulder. "Move your arms up in a windmill motion, but don't slam them into the water too hard. It hurts."

After a few tries, he finally gets it. I teach him how to do the S curve and with my upholding, he can now propel himself across the water- for a short distance.

"The next important thing is," I say, catching him as he tries to shoot off on his own, "Is your feet. Don't thrash it around like a madman. Instead, push it up and down in graceful paces."

Sena tries to do that, but he only ends up kicking water all over me.

"Alright, then," I say. "Backstroke yourself to the shore."

This time, I barely have to hold him up as his feet stay upright, his hands moving quickly through the water as he sends himself back towards the shore.

His hand reaches out and catches the shore just in time before his head hits it. Of course, it's not dangerous, seeing that I've done that loads of times (which is a lot, thanks to my clumsiness and daydreaming qualities).

"Flip yourself over- there," I say, watching as he grips the shore and allowing himself to turn over in the water. The moves are so elegant that you would have thought that he was a professional at swimming. He will be one, anyway, by the time I finish.

"This is cooler than I thought," he says, watching as I let go of him and head to grip the shore adjacent to him.

"Kick your legs like this," I say, paddling my feet up and down in a rhythmic way, the intervals between kicks mostly equal.

"Alright," he says, slowing his pace and mimicking my splashes as I kick the water behind me. He eventually gets the hang of it after some time, causing me to beam happily.

"You're a pretty fast learner," I say, patting his back as he lets go of the shore and lies on his back curiously. "Much faster than me, anyway."

"You're a pretty good teacher," he shoots back, smiling. "Much better than me, anyway."

I can't help but blush the slightest.

We master the the backstroke, and after that, the front stroke. With Sena a fast and eager (and over-energetic) learner, we take on the butterfly stroke (with some difficulty- Sena still has that tendency to kick a bit too hard on one leg, causing him to move in the wrong direction. We get it done, though). By this time, the sun has finally risen properly, and the people are finally up and about- though not in this part of the island, of course.

Sena can now properly stay afloat- and swim. His hair is all matted from the water, his pants stuck to his legs, but his face is just as happy as ever.

"Tag!" Sena says after a few minutes rest.

Before I can object, he dives into the water and dash straight towards me. I wasn't lying when I told you he can swim- he really can swim- and he's pretty good at it, now that he knows the basics.

I dart out of the way just in time to dodge Sena's outstretched hand. I grin, excitement forming in my head.

"Come and get it," I say, swimming away and watching as he comes after me with astonishing speed.

I shoot through the water right and left, trying to lose him. Unfortunately, my partial leg means that I have to kick it slightly harder than my normal side in order to keep going properly, tiring me out rather quickly. Not to mention that I am the hiccup of Berk.

After suddenly turning around diving under him and making a beeline for the shore, I clutch myself tightly for breath as I let Sena finally catch up to me.

"Gotcha," he says, swimming up to my side and too breathing heavily. "Man, you're pretty good at this."

"That chase only lasted for like, 2 minutes," I point out, panting.

"But you have a lot energy, you know," he says. "A lot more than I thought."

Rather than take it as an insult, I smile at his compliment.

"Thanks," I say. "You're pretty fast, too."

"Whatever," he says, recovering quickly. He splashes some water onto my face.

"Hey!" I say, splashing water right back at him. I don't have much stamina left, but I will definitely not lose to Sena in a waterfight.

We splash at each other furiously, getting even more tired by the moment.

"Uh- hey, stop it," I gasp, only to eat a mouthful of water.

"Oh, sorry," he says, ceasing his water torment, which became pretty one-sided after a while due to my exhaustion.

We both stand there, panting for a while more, when I finally regain the energy to speak.

"Alright, I think we should head back to shore now- " '

BANZAI!

A huge black dragon flies over my head, landing in the water with a huge splash.

"Toothless!" I say, my tiredness forgotten for a moment as I swim up to him and give him a hug by the neck.

Missed me? he says, snorting softly. _It's been so long since I've seen you._

"We didn't see each other for, like, an hour and a half," I say, grinning.

Yeah, but it felt like forever, he says, cooing gently. _Like, I even saw you in my dreams and everything-_

"WHAT?!" I yell, pushing myself away from him. He saw me in _what?_

Um, just before I went to sleep! he says hastily, whimpering slightly. _I was dreaming about something else after that!_

"You better have," I mutter, letting Toothless swim up to me and give me a lick.

You couldn't know, could youâ€|? he says, his eyes slitting briefly, making me incredibly nervous, but after a while he loses suspicion and reverts back to his normal self.

Phew.

By the way, you look kinda weird without your clothes on, Toothless says, smiling. _Like, you know, you're kind of bare._

I glare at him, but he only goes back to splashing around in the water.

After a few more snippets of conversation, we head up to shore, where Sena and me lie on our backs, letting the fully awoken sun dry us.

"Wow, that was quite a workout," I say, bringing up an arm under my head.

"That was," he says happily, then curiously points towards my shoulder. "Hey, is that hair under your arms?"

"Uh- um, yeah, that is," I say, blushing. "Why-"

I feel Sena right next to me, _sniffing_ my armpit.

"GAH!" I say, scooting back from him in shock. "What the hell?!"

"I _knew_ something smelled funny," he says, pulling back and laughing. He lifts his own arms and shows his bare armpits to me. "See? _I_ don't smell weird."

His words only cause me to blush even more. Thank Odin Toothless is still splashing in the water, covering himself with water (and loving the feel of it, from what I can sense).

"Neverâ€| _ever_â€| do that to a girl," I say through gritted teeth.

"Oh, I thought Astrid liked macho boys," Sena says off-handedly.

I wheel on him, but he just stays where he is, grinning madly. I wonder if our blackmails would cancel each other out.

"And there isn't even that much!" I say, desperately trying to get rid of the redness on my face.

"Oh, so you're in the growing phase," he says, raising his hands and staring happily into the sky. I'd welcome Toothless's fantasies with open arms, at any rate.

"You'll get yours soon enough," I shoot back, my face burning. "And you'll smell, too."

"I don't think about that much," he says. "Why should I care about growing up?"

I can't help but smile at his innocence. Man, if only I became immortal earlier.

****S****

We get back into our clothes not long after staying in the sun. Toothless can dry up Hiccup and his clothes with the Night Fury fire, but can't do the same to mine. It must have something to do with the immortality, I think. Instead, I have to wear Hiccup's spare, and I can see a little yellow stain on the tunic. Toothless won't get close to me, either. Nonetheless, he's by the mouth of the cave to send us off as we make our way to the trading centers.

I wonderâ€¦ has Hiccup ever thought of the fact that he'd make a really great older brother? He has all the characteristics for one, and a lot more. Besides, he and Toothless are about as close as brothers anyway. They did become one, after all.

I wished that I had someone who cared for me like that. I don't have any brothers or sisters, and my parents aren't exactly friends. I don't even know if my friends back home are really friends or not. I would give a lot to have someone who cared me as much as Hiccup.

Or, well, at least someone who acknowledges my care for them.

The journey towards the market square is surprisingly quiet, despite Hiccup's somewhat renewed enthusiasm, but it's almost as if he's trying too hard to be excited.

"Hiccup?" I ask, holding several slabs of Minox in my hands. "You alright?"

"Um, yeah, why?" he asks, his hands also carrying a significant amount of alloy, but I can see his face falter slightly from the weight.

"Hiccup," I say reassuringly. "Give me those metals. I'll carry them for-"

"No!" Hiccup snaps, looking away from me.

"Huh?" I say, stopping. To my surprise, Hiccup doesn't.

"Iâ€¦ can do this," he says, his face fiercely determined, doubling his efforts in carrying the metals. "I'llâ€¦ do thisâ€¦ myself."

I quickly catch up to him, my face full of concern but otherwise not asking anything. He really wants to get these things sold, I guess.

I wonder why.

At the square, the people are already waiting impatiently for the promised unrustable metal. They're grouped in a circle around the container holding the Minox, shouting and talking and ever bartering at the same time. The Governor stands on top of the now closed crate, the alloy in his hands. It gleams powerfully in the sun's rays. I can sense the desperation of some of the people here, too.

"Calm down! Calm down!" the Governor's voice booms through the square, though it does little to silence the massive amount of talking. "There's nothing to be worked up about! They'll be here anytime-" he notices us and beams. "There!"

Instantly, everyone's eyes are on us- or, more like, the metal. They would pounce on us right away if it weren't for the numerous guards stationed all around the square. With more people comes less obedience, I guess.

"It's unrustable!" someone from the crowd yells.

"It'll be perfect for swordsmaking!" someone else shouts.

"I'll pay you this whole-"

"Now, now," the Governor yells over the crowd. "Let them settle in their stations, shall we? Then you can barter all you want."

I see Hiccup, his face beaming now rather than fierce.

"So, where are we going to set up shop, then?" Hiccup asks, walking up towards the Governor. I follow suit and notice that several people are already fighting each other for it. This thing must be really valuable, no?

I can already hear Toothless snorting in my ear. Dragons, according to legend, care little for gold or human-expensive items. They crave for power and land. Which is why the Isle of Night is also a colony as well as a habitat of Night Furies. They expanded from their own outlying islands, and inwards towards the larger islands.

"There!" the Governor booms, pointing towards the market. "The second rightmost station, at the very front of the port."

"Thanks," I say, rounding up with Hiccup and following him as we walk through the masses of people. Along the whole way, I see people who are interested, people who look jealous, and people who just want to sell their own stuff. Sure, this place isn't a metal-only market, but alloys are quite an important trade item here. It's highly valued and can feed a family for days with just the smallest of amounts. I used to steal scraps of tin and barter it for food; it was then that I

knew that metal feeds people, not food. We weren't hungry for days.

More than once, someone would try to lunge at us and steal the metal, but the guards, along with the traders would help fend them off. The rules were strict here, and committing any sort of crime here would disgrace your village by a large margin, whereas protecting the peace is rewarded by recognition and credit. These thieves must be desperate if they want to get their hands on the Minox.

As we reach the station, the other users of the booth back off to allow us in. The stations, which have large and long tables and sacks all ready for trade, are built in here for the larger villages, so when a ship from one of these said villages pulled in, they'd be fully prepared and ready to sell. Which is good as well, because the carrying of all this metal is _tiring._

"This is my village's station," I say, setting the metals down on the wooden tables with a _thunk._ "We share it with a few more, so we should talk to them a bit, too."

"Sure. Hi," Hiccup says, beaming at the guy next to us. None of the others really feel like talking to us, also being metal dealers. This particular man sells leather, and is usually a large rival to my village's own trade. "How's it like here?"

"Just swell," he says, his rough voice clear and loud. "How about I give you a shout out, kiddo?"

"That'd be great," I say, smiling. "I'm sure it'll attract lots of customers to your shop as well."

Which is, I remind myself, the only reason why he'd bother to offer us help anyway. Marketers are often the heroes and also simultaneously the devils of the world, and Halla was no exception.

"Have you ever been in charge of something like this?" Hiccup asks, waving to a customer as he passes by.

"Not really," I say, excitement flowing through me. "Hey, what do you say we open shop right now?"

"That would be an excellent idea," he says, beaming.
"Misterâ€|?"

"Kaai," he says. "OI! THE VILLAGE OF NORD HAS OPENED UP FOR TRADE!"

As soon the nearby shops and passers-by hear that we're ready for business, the news spread like wildfire through the whole market, and smiths and metal dealers are already amassing at our booth.

"And all thanks to Toothless," Hiccup mutters. I laugh.

"I'll give you a whole cart full of meat for that slab!" a voice yells right away.

"I'll give you a dozen swords!"

"I'll give you a whole ship!"

"We probably don't need any of that, do we?" I mutter. Hiccup nods.

"Let's start with the poorer guys, then," Hiccup says, pointing to a young, but also poor late-teenage boy who looks clearly desperate.

"You," I say, beckoning him closer. Amid the chaos, the crowd parts for him.

"I- I on' ha' half e dozen n'books," he says, showing his lot rather pitiful lot. I can tell that he's from really far up north, with his fur coat and slightly sweating body.

"I'll take that," Hiccup says, and the crowd lets out a collective gasp. "Here."

Hiccup hands over a palm-sized amount of metal over to him. He accepts it and hands over the notebooks with shaking hands.

"Feed your family with that, no?" I say, winking at him. He immediately nods and runs off, the crowd going berzerk almost instantly.

"Why so cheap?"

"Why sell it to a mongrel like that?"

"Why not buy it for this dragon horn-"

I can see Hiccup's voice change instantly the second he hears that.

"Anyone who is selling anything, _anything,_ related to dragons," he says, his voice rising incredibly loud, "Leave. You're not welcome here."

"C'mon, lad, dragon hide is just-"

"Get. _Out,_" Hiccup says. Under the table, I can see his fists balled up.

"Before I call the guards and tell you you're harassing us," I say, trying to remember the rules of conduct for Halla. I swear, if I had only known how to read earlierâ€¦

A small group within the traders leave, grumbling incessantly. The remaining traders quiet down almost by tenfold.

"Anyone else?" Hiccup asks, his face still full of anger.

When no one else introduces any form of dragon material, he nods and lets me get to trading.

"I'll try and help the other shop sell their stuff," he says. "I can't believe that people are that sick to sell dragon stuff."

"Yeah," I say, thinking of dragon hide and swearing never to tell him of what the people normally sell here. Luckily, it's not that time of the year where the markets are filled with hunters.

In case you're wondering, it's dragon _blood._ They say that it can cure illnesses, fight off danger, even grant you good luck, depending on what dragon it came from. Makes you hate humans, eh? I certainly do.

"Alright, anyone who is waiting to be called, you can buy this fine gentleman's leather," Hiccup says, causing me to glare at him briefly. If that guy gets rich, then our village will be in trouble. Butâ€¦ well, it'll give me an excuse to come back here again. Toâ€¦ do stuff.

The group lessens once again, leaving me to listen and pick out the most needy of the traders and give them this valuable piece of Minox, where they can sell it back at their own villages for an astronomical amount of anything they want.

A trader is eager on hassle.

"Five charcoal pens," he says.

"No," I say. Hiccup would kill me for that.

"Ten charcoal pens," he says.

"Not good enough," I say.

"Fine," he says. "Twenty."

"Fair enough," I say, beaming.

I show the charcoal pens to _Niison_, who beams at me.

"Make sure you keep those well," he says, his anger subsiding quickly. "You'll need them for more runes learning."

"Alright," I smile, watching as the traders once again pile in.

"Fifteen cobs of corn for the small slab!" a farmer's voice yells.

"Eight hammers and twenty nails! For the large slab!" a carpenter shouts.

"Four crossbows for the small slabâ€¦" a man says.

"Sixty fish for the small slab!" a fisherman calls.

"Alright, you with the crossbowâ€¦" I say, handing over the small slab. I can only guess that Hiccup smelted these things before he met me, because they're all the same size, in two different sizes.

"Twenty arrows!" a smith offers.

"Four oars!" a shipmaker says.

"Dragon-" someone shouts.

"Get out," I snap. The man leaves in a fit of anger, stomping on the ground and causing a ruckus. In the corner of my eye, I see him being hauled away by the guards.

Man, and adults call themselves _adults._

"The guy who said arrows? Hello?" I call, looking around frantically for the guy who was willing to exchange the weaponry.

"He's over there," Hiccup says suddenly from next to me, pointing to a man in his forties not far away. "Hey! Mister!"

"Here," I say, handing the Minox over to him.

"Thank you," he wheezes, handing over the silver-topped arrows. I nod and he leaves.

"Why would you want arrows?" Hiccup asks curiously.

"You'll see," I say, smiling.

The group passes by and forth, and I manage to trade the smaller slabs for food, but the larger slabs are left untouched, due to my fear of underpricing them. The slammer slabs can be pretty useful for only so much, but the large ones could make several swords, and that should cost a lot. But how do I sell them to cost a _lot?_

"Here," I hear Hiccup say next to me. "I'll deal with this."

****H****

"Eh?" Sena asks, looking at me with surprise.

"C'mon," I say, hustling him towards the traded products. "Pack them up. It's nearly noon."

"We're closing shop early?" he asks. I point towards the three large slabs left on the table.

"We're going to need someone to carry all this," I say. "I'm not sure if I could-"

"Sure", he says, beaming. "I'll get that done right away."

Grinning, I turn back towards the still large amount of people in front of us.

As I hear their shouts and screams, I really think of birds and their melodies, their voices alone nice, but in uncoordinated groups, just terrible. I try and seek out anything that I actually need, when I lay my eyes on an old tailor.

"Hey, mister?" I say, calling him towards me. I lower my voice spectacularly as he approaches. "You make custom sizes?"

"Ei'd do," he says in a strange accent I've never heard before. The

world is a large place.

"Alright," I say, handing him a papered plan of my tunic. "Can you get me, um, three of these?"

"Just this for such a large block of treasure?" he asks, his eyes contracting. "You have plans for pants as well?"

Fortunately, I just do.

"Tell you what, kid," the man says, "I'll get this done in no time. I'll get the slabs when I'm done, I daresay?"

"Yes, sir," I say, beaming. "Thanks."

As the man sets off, a woman catches my eyes immediately.

"Miss! Lady!" I say, but she can't hear me. She walks past by, a large set of buckets filled with fresh bread in her hands.

"I'll get her," Sena says. "Hey! You!" he yells, jumping out of the stall and calling her here.

I have to admire his courage and determination. Not a lot of people are willing to do that.

But, Sena, as young as he is, is as equally powerful in his own way.

"Yes?" the young lady- no, girl, says as she passes by. Se possibly can't be older than Sena.

"Uh, I was wondering how many more of these baskets you had," I ask, noticing her avoiding gaze.

"About five," she says, giving me a wide look. "And all that forâ€|?"

"Yes," I nod. "One slab of unrustable iron."

"C-can I go get the stuff as well?" Sena asks, his face blushing slightly. I roll my eyes.

"Yes," I say, then much more quietly, "But don't run off with her."

He shoots me both a glare and a grateful look and jumps past the counter with the girl.

"Alright, final slab!" I yell, clapping my hands. "One final slab of unrustable iron!"

The crowd offers the most they can from me, but in the end, I choose a couple of metal hammers and a large anvil for the metal, along with several types of foreign spices.

The real reason, of course, is so that Toothless can make more Minox out of them.

By then, people will be selling the same Minox around and around, and

by then the cost of the Minox will have dropped a bit. In any case, it's good bargain.

The clothes are done right before Sena arrives. I quickly hide the tunics at the bottom of the sacks, and finish covering them with the anvil just as Sena arrives.

"Here's all the bread!" he says, red-faced from both exhaustion and infatuation. He sets the food down on the table and looks at the black-haired girl. "Here you go, miss. The Minox is all yours."

"Thank you," she says, and I turn around just in time to see her give Sena a little peck on the cheek. I can tell that she doesn't really mean anything, but to Sena, poor Sena, he feels like the world is nothing but her. They probably don't even know each other's _names_ yet.

Sena splutters heavily, forcing me to turn my head backwards to save him from the eternal humiliation that he'd face if he knew that I saw him. The crowd is dissipating now, and I'm packing up the stuff for the hauling back.

Three full bags of stuff.

****H****

As we haul them all back, I can feel Sena's excitement continue throughout the whole way.

"You _do_ know that you won't see her again, you know," I say pointedly.

"I know," he says dreamily. "But she was just so nice!"

I roll my eyes.

"I felt this way towards Astrid too," I admit, hauling one of the sacks. Sena smiles as he pulls the other two.

"You did?" he asks, smiling. "What's it feel like?"

"Everything just felt right," I say. "And nothing else in the world ever mattered but her."

"And you have plans with her all worked out?"

"And I thought of nothing but her all day and night."

He grins. "So, what do you feel about her now?"

"I don't know. I know I won't see her again, but I still hope," I say, sighing.

I feel a hand being placed on my shoulder.

"Is this what it feels like? To like someone?" he asks, his face suddenly serious.

After a small pause, I give him a nod.

"Yeah."

****T****

We have a feast when Hiccup and Sena get back. About time, too. I was running out of fantasies for Stormfly.

Burnson even spiced the fish for me! That's the best present I could ever have!

"Shut up and eat the rest," he says, laughing along with Sena. I warble.

Promise me you'll get more, I say, closing my eyes and grinning in bliss. Man, this felt just like dragon nip, but _edible._

"Sure," he says, smiling.

Sena's eating fresh bread now- it looks far better than the stale ones that he and Hiccup had days before.

As _Mikata_ opens the rest of the packs, I hear Sena's surprised shout when he sees three extra sets of tunics at the bottom of the sack.

"Who would need these?" Sena asks confusedly.

"You don't get it yet?" Hiccup says, laughing as I finally get it. "They're for you."

I can only purr as I watch the younger boy stare at the older boy in shock.

Ah, the perks of being friends. Never a dull moment.

* * *

><p>Welcome to the event of happy LesserWraith, a rare phenomenon where heit is quite satisfied with his/its work. Seriously. I love this chapter!**

****Glossary: ****

****_Kru-_ Teacher, Thai. Also pronounced _Kuu _or _Kruu._****

7. Guilt

****Another drabble-filled chapter! Note that these POVs have a short time gap separating each other.****

* * *

><p>Toothless laughs quietly as Sena gives me a confused look.<p>

"...What?" Sena says, his face in shock.

"You heard me," I say, smiling. "These tunics are for you."

Sena picks up these coats and looks at me blankly. I wasn't expecting anything less from him when I showed him these tunics. For someone who has been poor his whole life, this thing must be like running into a pool full of gold.

But, of course, the said pool of gold isn't exactly comparative to the what he's seeing now.

He stands there, looking at me, the sun once again momentarily blinding us as it flares through our cave. The whole cave is silent, even Toothless, who is simply staring at me and Sena interestingly. He isn't even bothering to make mental conversation.

It's interesting, you know, to think of what the other is thinking in a situation like this. When someone has been given something, do they think about what they did to deserve it? Or are they thinking of how kind you are? Or are they cautious of it, wondering what other intentions you might have for this occasion? Maybe they wonder about what stupid people we are, to be giving things like this. Maybe they're mentally turning the gifts into gold already, their head spinning of how much profit they'd gain from exactly zero budget.

For me, my intentions are clear, and Sena knows that. I want Sena to be happy.

After a sinisterly verbless silence, Sena speaks up.

"These shirts must have cost a fortune," he whispers. "And all for me?"

"Well, of course-" I begin, but Sena holds the perfectly folded tunics right back at me.

"I can't have these," he says, his voice trembling. "I can't."

My mind jolts for a second at this comment, but I don't say anything.

"Why not?" I say, raising an eyebrow. "They are from the Minox trade, you know."

"Yeah, but..." he whispers, his hands still held out. "I..."

"Hm?" I ask, patiently waiting for him to answer.

"Hiccup," he says, walking up to me, the tunics almost on my chest. "These aren't mine."

"Yeah," I say, nodding. "But I gave them to you. So they're yours."

Sena looks at me with the greatest sign of pain etched on his face.

"I can't take any more from you," he says, shoving the tunics into my hand and running outside.

"Sena!" I yell, standing in place, taken aback from all that happened.

Which, in this case, is a lot.

I look at Toothless, mentally saying _Help me _and praying that he knows what to do.

Follow him, he says. _I won't be far._

"Right," I mutter, setting down the tunics next to the bag.

I dash out of the cave and towards the only place that I know that Sena would afford to be in; the trees. If he doesn't want to wear those tunics, he can't be in the water, lest he get wet again, especially because he knows I have no more spares.

"Sena!" I call, running towards the small forestation. "Sena!"

What the hell?! I was just making a friendly gesture towards him, and all of a sudden he's running off and saying something about "I can't". He can't what? Accept a gift from a friend?

I makes no sense to me. Only Sena would have the answer to Sena's questions.

"Sena!" I yell, reaching the end of the trees. The woods are just so short, he couldn't have gone that far.

Where is he?!

"Sena?!"

I desperately dash left and right through the trees, turning around like crazy in search for him.

"Sena?!"

"Se-"

I'm about to call his name again when something collides with me _really_ hard. I stumble back, but don't

"Hiccup." Sena's voice comes from behind me. It's obvious that he's also been looking for me too.

I slowly turn around, rubbing the spot on my back where he ran into me.

"_Sena!_ Don't do that again!" I snap, looking cross. And, well, _feeling_ cross.

"I sorta wanted to talk to you in private," he says, his eyes not quite meeting mine.

"Why don't you want Toothless to hear this?" I ask, knowing very well that he can hear me from half a mile in any direction.

"Because he'd get mad," Sena says quietly. "And I don't want to hurt anyone else."

In my head, the breathing of a dragon becomes loud once again.

Oh, I won't listen, Toothless says, cooing. _I'll hear it from you later._

I make a mental note to question him how he manages to make all the best decisions at all the best times, because, by the looks of this impending conversation, Toothless will get _very_ mad.

Thanks, I think. He croons, and then I hear him splashing into the water.

"Isotonic dragon," I mutter, remembering the phrase from Fishlegs a few months ago.

"Alrightâ€|" he says, his feet kicking the ground, his happiness definitely not present. "I can't take all this stuff from you, Hiccup."

"Why?" I ask. "You seemed perfectly fine a few minutes ago."

"Becauseâ€|" he begins, his hands fidgeting as his feet slowly cease their dance. "I don't deserve it."

"What?" I ask, remembering the last time I told Toothless I didn't deserve anything. Does Sena feel the same way?

Is he as insecure as me?

"I've lived my whole life stealing from others," he says. "And whenever I stole something, I would always feel this sensation of success." he lets out a sigh. "I don'tâ€|" I don't want to feel like that again. Especially when it's you who I'm taking things from."

"But you didn't steal it," I point out. "You just-"

"Yeah, right," he snaps, his feet stopping and his black eyes staring into my own. "I stole your notebook. I stole your food. And this is what you give me, Hiccup."

"Youâ€|" what?" I say, searching my tunic for the notebook. It's not there.

I look up at him in shock.

"See?" he says, his face hanging. In his hands now hold the notebook that I was searching for just seconds ago. "I took this from you while you were trading."

"That's a-" I begin.

"No!" he bursts out, his face flipping up and revealing a pair of angry eyes. "I've been _stealing_ from you, Hiccup! And you're acting like it's all nothing!"

"I didn't say that," I say, my thoughts clouded in the absorption of new facts but yet so clear.

"Then don't!" he says, his eyes watering. "Just punish me or something!"

"Sena-" I reach a hand out to him, but he smacks it away. Hard.

"I'm a thief!" he yells. "I can't possibly accept anything from you with clean hands anymore!" He points back to the cave shakily. "Those tunicsâ€¦ those tunics cost more than anything I've ever had. How do you think I've supposed to take those from you, knowing what I've been doing to you?"

"Then-"

"Just- just- go away from me. I can'tâ€¦ I can't stand it."

His eyes are pleading, his face showing signs of depression. This isn't the Sena that I know of.

"No."

"W-what?" he asks, taken aback. I use this opportunity to dash up to him and hug him tightly.

Despite his strong and energetic body, he cannot leave my arms.

"Mrnghh- mmph!" he says, thrashing against my arms. "Let me go! Let me go-"

I hold on tightly, my eyes piercingly resolute.

"Listen to your brother, Sena."

There's a deep silence as Sena stops fighting and looks up at me, his eyes watering.

"_Niisonâ€¦_" he says, slumping into my arms, his head resting on my shoulder.

"Don't worry, Sena," I say, patting his back as he lets loose his tears on me. "It's alright."

"I can't do this anymore. I don't want to hurt you anymore," he says, his eyes closed and his breathing light.

"Don't worry, Sena..." I say, letting him lean on me.

"Iâ€¦ stoleâ€¦ from youâ€¦" he asks, his voice catching.

"Why did you steal my stuff?" I ask, listening as the birds sing their calming melodies.

"Iâ€¦ I was curious," Sena says quietly. "I don't know what was in me. For a moment, everything was justâ€¦ survival. I didn't think twice when I grabbed your notebook. When I realized what I was doing, I felt as guilty as hellâ€¦ I planned to return it to you when you were sleeping."

I nod, my hands holding tightly on his back, urging him to let loose

his frustrations. "I know where you're coming from. When you're desperate, you tend to do a lot of things without thinking."

"I wanted to give up my old life and turn into someone new. But when you gave me those tunics, I remembered what I did before. I stole from you, and you're just handing these stuff to me. I didn't want to go back, so I left."

"I understand," I say, because I do. When you want to turn yourself over and start anew, you try not to let any old temptations take over you. It's brave of Sena to fight these thoughts and desires, and not give in to what he was once before.

As he cries, he begins to choke. I loosen my grip, but Sena leans onto me even harder.

No. Hug me harder. I don't want to end up running away out of guilt."

So I hug him tightly again, allowing him to cry once again on my shoulder.

"Please don't send me away," he whispers. "I don't want to become a thief again."

"What? Why would I do that?" I ask, my eyes shooting up in surprise.

"Because I hurt you," he says. "Especially when you never did to me."

"I find that unimportant," I say. "Everybody hurts somedays."

There's another silence at these words, save for the birds who have seemed to pick up a tune I once sang to Toothless. Is he singing a melody for Sena?

I end up singing along gently as Sena stays motionless in my arms.

Everybody hurts, everybody screams

Everybody feels this way, but it's ok.

"How can I repent myself?" he asks, his hands hugging me back gently. "I don't want you to think that I can't be trusted."

"You _are_ trusted," I say, "By me. And Toothless."

"After all that I stole from you?" he asks, his voice catching. "You still trust me?"

"If you don't have anything against me, then I have nothing against you."

There's a small silence at this.

"W...what?" he says. "Youâ€¦"

"If you want to atone," I say, patting his back, "Then you should start by apologizing."

There's a very long silence at these words.

"Sorry," he says. "I'm sorry."

I smile. "It's never too late to say that," I say.

Sena parts with me slowly, his eyes meeting mine in understanding.

"Andâ€¦ here."

He holds out the notebook, his hand outstretched, his face guilty but serious.

"Iâ€¦ I never thought that I'd do this," he says. "Butâ€¦ here I am."

I take the notebook quietly, a smile creeping onto my face.

"As for the other stuffâ€¦" I say, "Keep them. You probably need them, anyway."

Sena shakes his head fervently.

"I don't want to hurt you anymore," he says. "Just take it all back."

I grin.

"You're the worst thief in the world, you know," I say.

"I am," he says, smiling as well. "I am."

****S****

Have you ever done something really bad to someone, only to regret it later, but you can't confess to them, lest they hate you? The guilt that lies in your stomach, working its way up to your brain, feeding on your nerve cells, tingles your mind and leaves you sleepless for days, all weighing down on you?

Yeah. I've been feeling that ever since the first day. I never told him that I was eating his bread and fish. At first, I thought that he wouldn't give me any, but when he served me food right after that, I felt as bad as a sunken rock. I didn't know, at that time, that he really cared. I couldn't really trust anyone, for where I came from was lie or die, but he- Hiccup- was just so sincere that I began to trust him. But I never got over the stealing. And I did it again, just today, and the guilt was just so strong in me that when Hiccup handed me those tunics, I couldn't hold it. I bailed out.

Now, I ask you another question. Have you ever apologized to someone?

The feeling you get is just so powerfully good. You feel like a thousand sacks of guilt have been lifted from your shoulders, your mind and soul finally at peace after so much torment, your body

yearning to dance to release the feeling of freedom from fire.

I've never apologized to someone this truthfully and sincerely before.

Hiccup is truly a brother of mine. He does not punish me, but lets the torment punish me myself until I give into his teachings. He's likeâ€¦ well, Hiccup.

As we walk back towards the cave, I can hear the splashing of a dragon.

"I still can't accept those tunics, though," I say. "I don't think I could-"

"Sena," he says sharply. Seriously. Has Hiccup ever become more powerful than this?

"Just kidding," I say, laughing. "There is absolutely no way that I'd not accept those lovely tunics."

"Which cost a fortune," Hiccup adds. We both laugh at the simplicity of the words.

Of course, it costs a fortune. But not because it took a lot of Minox to be obtained.

It costs a fortune because it was given by someone whose intentions were for the best.

Intentions for a stupid, annoying boy like me.

"You're not stupid," Hiccup says. "Although, annoyingâ€¦"

I scratch my head. "I never told you that."

He smiles. "You as good as did."

I narrow my eyes. "You can't possibly look into my thoughts, can youâ€¦?"

Hiccup smiles innocently.

"You've got to be kidding me," I say, my mouth hanging open. "Is this because of the immortality as well?"

"It was a side effect," he says. "I wasn't expecting to be able to actually look into someone's thoughts."

"Must be cool," I mutter, licking my lips. "Imagine-"

"No."

"Fine," I grumble.

He sighs. "You're just like Toothless, you know that?"

"Yes, because I'm big, black, and have wings," I say, stretching out my arms like a bird. Or a dragon. "Whoosh! I'm flying!"

I run around like this for a while, making bird sounds as I dash here and there, the wind flying under my arms, when I hear Hiccup laughing.

"What?" I ask, stopping in front of him and looking at him curiously.

"Nothing," he says.

"Nothing?!" I ask, staring at him. "You can't laugh because of _nothing_!"

"Oh, yes, I can," he says, and starts laughing out of the blue.

I stare at him as he continues to laugh like a madman.

Despite my attempts to hold it in, I burst out laughing as well.

We both laugh crazily until Toothless jumps over to see what's wrong.

"Nothing, Toothless," Hiccup says, still laughing a bit. "Just laughing."

I can swear that I see Toothless roll his eyes.

****H****

After half an hour of the sun beating down on the cave and Sena organizing his stuff into the newly acquired bags, Sena goes outside with several bows and arrows. I don't bother asking my brain really in need of something to think about rather than the events just beforehand.

I sit down and begin drawing into my notebook again. This time, of a boy running around through a meadow, his arms outstretched in aerial control over his body. His face is smiling in delight, the freedom of flying flying through his body like adrenaline.

It's nice to be able to fly, Toothless says, sitting next to me and looking at my picture.

"It should be," I say. "Wanna go flying?"

I'm good, he says, shaking his head.

"_What _has gotten into you lately?" I ask, rolling my eyes. "You're not usually the guy who likes to stay on the ground."

The last time I checked, we're staying on an island with lots and lots of people, he says. _Not all of them like dragons, either._

Right. So that means no flying until we can leave this place.

"Oh, yeah," I say, a thought coming back to me. "Did you know that they trade dragon _hide_ there?"

Toothless raises an eye (since he has no eyebrows), but otherwise doesn't say anything. His nonchalance angers me.

"What?" I say, glaring at him. "I thought you'd be angry at these people!"

I prefer to imagine me eating them _than to get angry,_ he says, snorting. _Far more satisfying_

He doesn't get to finish this sentence as I scoot to the far side of the room.

Hey! I was joking! he says, growling a bit as he advances on me. _I don't even_ like _human meat!_

"You'd better not," I mutter. "Otherwise I'm so getting out of here."

Get real, Hiccup, he says, rolling his eyes. _I've never even_ considered _eating a human before._ He whimpers a bit. _I live for fish, andâ€¦_

"And?" I ask, putting my notebook down.

Y-Stormfly, he says, shying as he changes his words mid-sentence.

"Admit it," I say, smirking. "You know that Stormfly's had it for Meatlug all this time-"

I don't get to finish my words either, as he jumps right onto me, tackling me down, not unlike the very first day we met.

Don't you ****ever**** _say that!_ he roars, spitting fire into my face. For a fleeting second, I can feel anger and jealousy in those blue-red fires as they pass me. What interests me, of course, is why I'm not burnt to a crisp. Night Furies have a _lot_ of firepower.

"I-I'm sorry!" I yell, trying to dodge the incoming fires and even teeth as he lashes at me, and not really giving me that much room to escape because of my pinned-down position. "I didn't mean to-"

Shut up! Maldrit!

Toothless ceases his attack, but growls at me angrily.

Don't you ever, ****ever****_, say anything like that about Stormfly again,_ he growls. ****_Ever._****

"A-alright," I say shakily. "I-I'm sorry. I-"

Toothless (and I) sense another presence in the cave as Toothless is about to incinerate me again.

"Hiccup? Are you- oops!" Sena says, trying very hard to not laugh as he sees me being pinned _right_ under Toothless, who is panting heavily. My eyes widen as I see him looking at us two in this _very_ awkward position. "I- I didn't know that you were into _that_ kind of stuff."

"This isn't-" I begin. Toothless whimpers slightly, oblivious to what

Sena means by this.

Are you hurt, Hiccup? he asks, concerned. Well, concerned in the less important things.

"I-I'll leave you two alone now," Sena says, his face blushing slightly. He hastily leaves the cave before I can say anything else, his laughter being heard from the outside.

"Toothless!" I snap, staring into those two guilty eyes with infuriation. "Get off me!"

I-I'm sorry, he says, slinking off me and whimpering. Ouch.

I roll my eyes. "I'm _fine,_ Toothless. Or I think I am."

I'll- I'll stay here, then, he mumbles, his eyes wide with disdain.

"Thanks," I say, getting up. "I'll talk to you later, bud."

Still regretful, but cheered up by the fact that I called him his trademark "bud" (which is sort of like how he calls me _Mikata_), he gives me an apologetic smile.

I won't lash out again-

"I _know,_ Toothless," I mutter, heading for the cave mouth. Seriously. What Sena must be thinking right now.

Alright, he says, his head in his wings from either shame or guilt.

At least he doesn't know what Sena's thinking, though. _Then_ I'd definitely die.

I leave the cave quickly, my face burning with embarrassment.

"Sena!" I snap, walking up to him, just outside the woods. He tries very hard to stop his laughter as he sees me.

"Did you two have a good time?" he asks, smiling broadly. When did he get so _annoying_?!

"I- I didn't even _do_ anything to him!" I say, glaring at the boy in front of me, who continues to smile evilly.

"Don't be shy to admit it," Sena smirks, clapping his hands together. "It's normal for two people who love each other to-"

"Shut up-"

"-Now, who confessed to who?" he says, laughing madly.

I jump at him.

"C'mere, you-" I say as he dashes away from me.

"Just try and catch me!" he taunts, sticking out his tongue as he

stands a few distance away from me, legs ready for flight at the moment's notice.

I run right at him, reaching my arms out to catch him, only to have him dodge again at the last second.

"Get over here!" I yell, running after him as he again and again scoots away from me.

"Did you two kiss?" he asks. I snap. That's it.

"I am not in love with Toothless!" I yell, lunging at him one last time.

"Oh, y-" He trips on a rock and falls down, his body sprawled out on the grass.

"You idiot," I mutter, walking up to him and offering him a hand up. "How would you think that I loved Toothless that way?"

He takes the hand, getting up slowly and panting slightly.

"You looked pretty convincing," he mutters, and I can't help but shove him lightly.

It's a rough, playful push, something that I've never really done before. For some reason, it feels fun. In the split second right after I do that, though, I fear that I might have hurt him.

It turns out that Sena is anything but hurt.

"Hey!" he says, smiling and pushing me right back. "I was just kidding!"

I stagger back a few steps, my prosthetic not really helping my ability to stay rooted to a spot.

I walk up to him and push him back, laughing. "Stupid brother."

He's about to shove me again when he abruptly stops.

"What?" I ask, looking at him questioningly. Honestly, that was kind of fun, even though I hate violence. But that wasn't violence, right? That was just playing. It might have been awkward, but it's the fact that we played that counts.

And, for a boy, and especially a boy who's never physically forced like me, that was fun.

"So, you don't like Toothless?" he asks, cocking his head to the side.

"He's a good friend, but I am definitely not going to have babies with him," I say, laughing.

He nods. "You do know that I was kidding, right?" he asks, grinning at me.

I roll my eyes. "Duh."

"It's not wrong that you would, though," he says nervously. "It's just awesome that it's never happened, despite you two being so close."

"The very thought is disgusting and repulsive," I say, chuckling. "I mean, how would you expect me to _kiss_ Toothless?"

"I'm not even going to answer that," Sena says, and we both laugh.

****T****

"Sorry, Toothless," he says, sitting by my side. I croon and roll my eyes at him.

Stupid human. Always making me do the impulsive.

He scared me half to death, made me cower in fear, ruined my current fantasy of Stormfly, and he still has the face to apologize?!

For what, now? I ask. Sure, he's _Mikata_ and everything, but he can be just downright straightforward sometimes. He knows that I'm not in a good mood, and he still has the face to show up and tell me how _sorry_ he is. This guy is a legend.

"Forâ€¦ a lot of stuff," he mutters. "Especially since I've been leaving you alone for so long."

I raise my head at this, looking at him straight into his green and open eyes.

You have? I ask, cooing.

"Don't you feel alone sometimes?" he asks, stroking my scales softly. "There are just some days that we hardly even to get to _talk_ anymore."

This is true. Often will Hiccup nowadays spend most of his time with Sena, his mind and thoughts on either Astrid or the younger boy.

"I feel bad for not giving you more time," he says. "We're immortal, we're friends, but yet..."

...Yet, you don't think that we're close enough and everything? I ask, my ears perking up.

"Um, yeah," he says. "If you want, I can take a day off and fly with you-"

And leave Sena alone? I ask, my eyes widening. _In a town like this?_

"But- but don't you feelâ€¦ neglected?"

What?

"I mean, you're alone, when you could be playing with me. Don't you feelâ€¦ jealous?"

Not really.

"Huh?"

Night Furies are solitary creatures- we live in isolation. You must be one of the only people who can make such a solitary dragon so attached to a human, I say. _Andâ€¦ I'm grateful for that. But must I be with you all the time? Not really, Hiccup. You should do what makes you happy, and I can live with that. Besides, you're always in my sight range, anyway._

"Are you lonely when I'm not with you?" he asks, his face slightly gloomy.

My thoughts keep me occupied enough until you come talk to me, I say.

"...Thoughts about what?" he asks, scratching his head.

The future, Stormfly, Mother, Sena, fish, and you, I say, smiling slightly. _What else would I think of?_

"...But you still need to talk to me, right?"

Of course I do. We're there for each other, aren't we?

"...Right."

Seriously, I think that his idea of being for each other is ludicrous. We _are_ each other, and because of that, we won't be there for each other, for we _are_ each other. Do I need to repeat that again? Yeah. We _are_ each other.

Alright, think of it this way. You're walking to me now. What will Sena do in the meantime?

"He has his ways. I mean, he's always happy all the time-"

Then I have my own ways of staying happy too, Hiccup. Stop worrying already.

"Yeah, but I think that I haven't been giving much of my share," he says solemnly. Really, is he the kind of self-blame?

You give me your share all the time, I say, trying to cheer him up. _By being happy. And safe._

He gives me a weak smile.

"Still feel indebted," he says.

How about talking about stuff now? I ask.

His face tilts slightly at my idea.

"How's it like, thinking about Stormfly, then?" he asks, his face apologetic. I warble.

Well, she's a really cute dragon, I say, happy that he's finally willing to listen to my fantasies. _She has that smile that can light

up your whole world, you know. When you look at her, you don't want to look away._

"That sounds awfully familiar," Hiccup mutters. "Do you think I like Astrid the same way you like Stormfly?"

_The last time I checked, I have more intimate desires for her than you, I say.

Which is true, to say at the very least. Dragons don't have that incredibly long emotional scale like humans (though, as you can see, it can be expanded), so we tend to focus on the emotions that we have. That is, to put it bluntly, mating.

"Why do you dragons not have dates and makeout sessions and all that?" he asks jokingly, his notebook out once again.

Not afraid Sena will steal it again? I ask, snorting. He looks at me in shock.

"H-how did you know that?" he asks. I can sense fear radiating out of him like a fire does when exposed to the cold outside, but he isn't afraid for himself.

He's afraid for Sena.

You honestly thought that I couldn't hear you? I ask, closing my eyes and making a happy face. _I don't need to make my presence known when I'm hearing your verbal verbalizations, Hiccup. _

He stares at me, taking in my soft, playful demeanor. "And you weren't angry?"

You heard me thrashing around in the water, I believe. Well, except for the first part. That was to get into range.

"Oh," he says. "Sorry."

_Me too, I say, warbling. _I shouldn't have listened in on you like that._

"It's alright," he says, giving me a comprehensive look. "You did what you thought was best."

Of course, I'm right. I am a Night Fury. There are just some people who know better.

To be honest, though, you handled that thing pretty well. You even called him a little brother.

"He is like a little brother to me," he says, smiling. "Just like how you're like a big-"

I growl instinctively, and he changes his words (and opinions) mid-sentence.

"-friend," he says, smirking. "Really? With your overprotectiveness-"

Do you want to hear about Stormfly or not? I mutter, rather fed up

with his thoughts of "big brother". We're neither bigger or smaller than each other in any way. We might have different ages (which, thankfully, dragon and human years cannot be compared; it's the maturity that counts), build, diets, but we never see each other as the lower of the two. We always see each other as our superior, even if course, it's really far from the truth, because the truth is that we're equal, and equal are we in rank and trust.

Unfortunately, his view of me being a bigger brother is condescending both to me and himself- it implies that I am his knight in shining armor, and that he is the horse that I ride into to fight others and protect him. It implies that I have to feed him and everything, though that's sort of true as well- but that's not the point. The point is, we're more like 2 independent horses, running through the meadows and letting the head wind be the fuel for our goals and wanderlust. And yeah, the reality of it might look like I'm the horse and he's the rider, but really, if he had wings, he'd fly as well. He doesn't need me, but he chooses to stay next to me. (And shut up on the fact that I need him. I know that's true. But he's not my rider and I'm not his dragon. I'm me, and he's him, but we're us.)

"Um, alright," he says. "Soâ€¦ you see Stormfly as your future mate?"

I wish she was, I mumbles, and Hiccup pats me soothingly.

See? I need him.

"Aw, c'mon now. I know that you miss her," he says.

I do. But I'd miss you too, if you weren't with me.

Hiccup smiles, patting me smoothly. "So, you want a three way one-sided relationship?"

Four, I say, warbling. You can't forget to include your m-

"Shut up," he says, smiling.

I warble.

I could do a lot more to care about him, but right now, we're just two lovesick idiots, alone together.

"Hey!" Sena says, running straight in.

For some reason, Hiccup looks at me worriedly.

Hm? Is there something on my face? I ask, looking down at my scales in interest.

"I've just got this awesome idea," he says, pointing to the bows he's holding. "Why don't I teach you how to shoot?"

"Shoot?" Hiccup asks nervously as I watch with interest.

"Sure!" he says, holding out a hand for him. "You need to know how to protect yourself, too!"

"But-but- _Toothless_, " he says, looking desperately at me. "I can't fight."

Oh, yes, you will, I say, picking him up with my Toothless (Hiccup insists that I see the value in my name, even if it's an adjective) mouth and walking over to the mouth of the cave, Sena following me happily.

"Sena, Toothless," Hiccup groans as I set him down on the floor gently, his prosthetic clanking as he gets up. "You know how much I hate fighting."

But what if Astrid's in danger while you two are alone together? I ask mischievously. _I certainly can't be that knight in shining armor for you, you know._

That does the trick.

Hiccup gets up, glares at me, and grabs a bow from Sena's hand.

"Fine," he says, huffing him tremendously and heads outside the cave. "Let's go, Sena."

Don't forget to learn how to mate! I call after him, warbling.

* * *

><p>I swear! I swear that I'll get on with the plot!

8. Arrows

Welcome back! I might have to update far more sporadically from now on, but I shall do my best.

* * *

><p>H

I've learned a lot throughout my life. I yearn to learn more, too.

I learned how swim, how to work with metal, how to lift heavy objects (in this case, my prosthetic), and I even learned how to make friends with a dragon, especially when I was on the verge of losing it. Toothless brought that learning side out of me once again, and through my zeal of learning was I persistent enough to make him a prosthetic tail, bonding us for, like, forever. It's powerful how learning can bring you to do a lot of things that you never could. I like learning as much as Fishlegs (and possibly even more).

However, I am certainly _not_ happy to learn how to shoot an arrow.

"C'mon, Hiccup!" Sena says gleefully, smiling and running around like crazy. "It'll be fun!"

"You mean, it'll be dangerous," I mutter, but Sena only takes me by the hand and smiles.

"All fighting is dangerous," he says. "But learning how to is fun!"

"Where did you learn to shoot?" I ask, rolling my eyes.

"I kinda had to protect my house from other thieves," he says casually. The way he says it, of course, makes me feel guilty.

"Sorry," I say, holding his hand tightly. "I didn't mean to."

"Don't mind it," Sena says, smiling. "But you have to make it up by being enthusiastic."

"W-what?" I ask, looking at him like he's crazy. You can't force someone to be enthusiastic.

"Smile, then," he says. "Like, tell yourself, you're learning how to shoot so you can protect your princess in shining robes and that you can also help out T-"

I glare at him until he stops, but he only stops speaking. His smile never leaves him.

Of all things that he could do, be, and have, he chooses this smile above everything else. I don't know why he smiles so much. Is it because he's really happy? Or he just putting on a show for me?

As I ask him just that, he turns around and hugs me by the neck. It's a quick hug, but it's far better than taking hours upon hours to explain something. Especially since we, you know, just had a really long talk a few hours before.

And, finally, I do smile. It's one thing to have a great friend around you, and it's another to be happy when they want you to be.

"How about Toothless? Isn't he getting any say in this?" I ask, looking back and watching him curled up and asleep. What is he dreaming about again?

"Oh, you'll see," he says.

I want to tell him that he's probably going to see it all anyway, but I don't tell him.

"Here," he says, handing me a bow. "You know what this is, right?"

"Duh," I say, rolling my eyes. "I've seen them back home."

I don't tell him, of course, that I never really got around to actually making them. The metals were far too thin for my equipment to make, and I have no idea where I'd be able to find a substantial amount of feathers to attach to the end of the arrow. Berk's only few bows are only used by the older men of the village, those who actually know the secret to making them long gone. It's just that there are so many dragons that attack, the arrows don't really do much to hurt them, so the weapon quickly fell out of

favour.

"Awesome!" he says, jumping up and down enthusiastically. "We can get straight to the advanced part, then!"

"Advanced?" I ask, alarmed. "I- I just pointed you out the name."

"Oh course!" he says, shoving an arrow onto my reluctant hands. "That was the easy part! The advanced part is actually learning how to shoot it!"

I roll my eyes. Of course it's the doing part that's always the hardest. You could fantasize Stormfly for ages and ages, but it'll be hard to actually make it happen in real life-

I heard that! Toothless calls into my head. I smile.

"In other words, the hard part," I mumble, but Sena only raises his own arrow.

"Alright," I say, sighing. "How are we supposed to do this?"

"I'm getting to that," Sena says excitedly. "See your arrow?"

"Yes," I answer, holding it up. Hey, it can't be that bad knowing the parts of it, right?

"The end of the arrow is called the Nock," he says, pointing to the feathery end of the arrow. "It's where you grab when you're going to shoot it. We don't have a quiver yet, but I'll get one sooner or later."

I look at him blankly as he says all this enthusiastically.

"Right," he says, moving my hand to touch the end of the bow. "That's the nock." I nod.

"A quiver is basically the thing you use to carry arrows," he says. "Got it?"

"Alright," I say, the thing slowly making sense to me. "So you grab this part, right?"

"Yep," he says, smiling. "Now, there's the bow. All you really need to know about it are the bowstring and the limbs, and those are pretty obvious."

"I guess so," I say. "It's this and this, right?" I ask, gesturing towards the string and the edges of the bow.

He nods. "Now, grab your arrow by the tip, with the middle finger and the index finger. You know what those are, right?"

"Of course," I say, chuckling. "So, I do thisâ€|?"

I hesitate a bit, fumbling my fingers as they touch the nock of the bow. Sena points out that I'm grabbing it too far in, and then too far out, and then grabbing it wrongly, and then finally drops his own bow and arrow and holds the thing for me.

"Sorry," I apologize, incredibly embarrassed. "I just don't know this kind of stuff."

"As a craftsman," he says, ignoring my remarks, "It would be like balancing the tip of a rod with your fingers."

My memory rushes back at these words, the image of me pinching the end of a rod that would eventually be used in Toothless's prosthetic into the water, cooling it down quickly and making it usable for metalworks.

That rod was, of course, far larger than any kind of arrows that I've seen. How do people even mold things so thin and delicate?

I pinch the nock gently, my index finger and my middle finger landing on the nock perfectly where Sena mentioned.

"Excellent!" he says, jumping up and down, and I savour my brief time of pride. "Now, hold it up to your bow!"

"W-what?" I ask, wanting him to slow down, but he's already holding up his own bow, the nock in his fingers flawlessly.

"Put the nock and your fingers up the center of the bowstring," he says, showing me his position. "Like this."

He puts his thumb on the bowstring, drawing it back as he holds it up to his shoulder length. I watch him carefully, being sure to mimic his actions correctly.

"Alright," I say, holding the bow up. My fingers slip, though, and the arrow falls to the ground.

"Oh, no," I mutter. I reach down to pick it up, Sena looking at me curiously.

"Have you always been this clumsy?" he asks, giggling.

"Says Mr. Dexterity," I snap, pinching the nock again and holding it up. "Every I do is already worse than you by default, so it wouldn't matter."

"Well, I guess we'll have to change that, won't we?" he says, smiling.

I look at him curiously. "I can't get better than you," I say deflatingly. "You've had years of experience on this kind of thing."

"I could care less," he says, smiling. "I mean, I do, but only because I know that you can get better than me."

I feel a rush of gratitude at these words. I don't know why I feel it, but I feel it. I want to do more. I want to do better.

"I'll try," I say, smiling. "But don't count on it."

Sena holds the bow up once again. "Hold the string by the thumb like this," he says.

I do that, and he nods.

"See? You can do this kind of stuff," he says, smiling.

"Shut up," I say, laughing. Little brothers. Always trying to make you feel special.

"Now, stand like this," he says, gesturing to his legs with his head. "About shoulder length."

I shuffle my prosthetic a bit, but I eventually get the position right.

"Here comes the fun part," he says, smiling. "Grab the bow and draw the string back."

"You mean, like this?" I ask, gripping the middle far too tightly, fearing that I'm not doing correctly and drawing the string back a bit too far.

"Whoa, whoa!" he says, and I cease my stance immediately. "Take it easy. Grab it lightly, let the bow hover above your gripped hand, and pull it back, but not too far."

"Ok, ****_Kru_****," I say, laughing. He looks at me confusedly.

****_Kru_****?" he asks.

"Yeah," I say, bringing the bow up again and grabbing the middle part rather moderately.

"I'd rather you call me something else," he mumbles. I can sense his smile falter, actually.

"Why?" I ask. "Isn't that the word for 'teacher'?"

"Yeah," he says, nodding. "But it's for, you know, respected people."

I glare at him at this pessimism. "If I didn't respect you, I wouldn't be here, you know," I say.

"Still," he says. "Don't move too much, especially your legs."

I roll my eyes, but do as he says nonetheless.

"Now, hold your drawn hand back to your cheek, your bow raised like this," he says. His enthusiasm is never gone, but a part of his happiness certainly is. Why doesn't he like being told that he's respected? If he respects me, it's only right that I respect him back.

Nevertheless, I comply, and he smiles back at my own goofy one.

"You're getting there," he says, smiling. "Now, let go."

"What?" I ask, alarmed by the sudden escalation of magnitude in learning. "I shoot it? There isn't even a holder for the arrow! It

could go off to the left in any d-"

"Watch," he says confidently. Then, as an afterthought,
"Please."

Sena slips his fingers back quickly, letting go of the arrow, which shoots through the air and lands on the ground not far from us.

I stare at him in awe. How does he do that?

"See? It's not so hard," he says, looking at my own now-itching hands. "Just let it go."

I look right ahead, my eyes locked in determination.

"Got it," I say, narrowing my eyes. Inside, I feel a rush of adrenaline running inside me.

If I can do this, I can get better. I can protect myself.

I can protect Toothless and Sena.

I won't be the hiccup of Berk anymore.

I can do this.

With all my thoughts affixed into one tiny point in time, I let my fingers on the head flex as I take aim.

I can do this.

I throw all my arm's length backward as I let the arrow go.

Whoosh!

The arrow flies straight and true through the air, the head leading the rest of the body like a bird flying through the sky, until it finally reaches its maximum point, where it begins to tilt down and finally begin its descent back towards the lands below. It lands with a _phut_, sticking into the soil tightly.

With all adrenaline running through me, I stare and pant as my thoughts are all consumed into one thought.

I did it.

I, the Hiccup of Berk, the hiccup of Berk, has shot an arrow.

It might sound lame to you, but to me, who's never even _used_ a weapon properly throughout my whole life

"You did it!"

I register Sena's cheerful voice as it strums through my ears.

I turn and face him, beaming just as much as he is. Which is a lot.

"I did it, Sena," I say. "I did it."

"I told you that you could," he says, holding my shoulder gently.

"Yeah," I say, resuming my normal breathing. I can't act all giddy at thisâ€¦

"What? No celebration?" Sena asks, looking at me expectantly.

...can I?

"HIYAAH!" I yell, jumping onto Sena and hugging him wildly, causing him to lose balance and fall on the grass (again). I bury my face into his (my) tunic and blindly wrap my arms on him.

"Gerrrof!" Sena says, but he's laughing.

Eventually, I do get off him, but not amid the roars of laughter from Sena.

"Imagine how awkward that would be if I was someone else," he says, chortling with with.

"I know, right?" I ask, smiling goofily- but also confidently as well. "Toothless likes to jump on me, so I guess I got that nature from him."

At least you don't lick! a happy, husky voice resonates once again in my ears. I laugh.

"How do you say these things when you're asleep?" I ask mentally, watching Sena laugh and point at me hysterically.

I have an impression that some of my inner flame is in you, he says, causing me to smirk.

Next to me, Sena stops laughing and gives me a huge smile.

"Pretty overdramatic, I know," I say. "Can we do that again?"

"What, smother me?" he asks, but he holds up the bow again, telling me that he gets the message.

"What, was I that crazy?" I ask, embarrassment slowly creeping in.

"You were on the brink of insane bliss," he says, laughing. "C'mon. We'll try shooting again."

"Aw, c'mon, I was thrilled," I whine, holding up the bow and picking up another arrow.

****S****

We end up practicing our shooting throughout the whole evening- and even into the night.

Eventually, the sun finally says goodbye to the world, taking with it colors and liveliness, bringing upon silence and calmness to the land. There is no more light more us to shoot, but we keep shooting.

We go and retrieve our arrows from the forestation, and we even shoot into the dark, our fingers and fiery will .

We're just about ready to shoot another succession of arrows, of course, when one of them catches fire at the tip of Hiccup's poised arrow. It burns merrily, but does not catch to the other parts (the wooden bow is probably less fire resistant than the metallic bow itself).

"What the-" I say, alarmed, but I immediately hear the snort of a dragon beside me.

"Toothless!" I and Hiccup say, watching as the fire illuminates the arrow's head, and in turn us and our surroundings. Toothless's eyes glint with the hint of a powerful Night Fury, his eyes the same colour of the blue flames, his face dangerously close to the bow.

"You think it'd be dangerous?" Hiccup says. Toothless smiles, warbling at me.

"Hey, Toothless," I say, and Hiccup repeats after me, albeit with a happier face- as if I could be any happier than now.

"I've heard of fire, and I've heard of arrows", he says, staring at the deadly- but yet elegant- weapon. "But never fire arrows."

At first, I'd never thought that I'd be handling such a deadly thing like this again. I learnt archery back at home with some of my other friends- I was supposed to do it to shoot down birds, and I often did to get our family going. Nonetheless, I'm against violence, but I can feel the rush of pride that I have for teaching him as I watch him prop his up for fire. And fire.

"That sounds interesting," Hiccup says, raising it up and shooting the arrow as far as he can. The spot where it lands is lit up by the fire, where it stays briefly until it goes out.

"Funny," I say curiously, letting my own arrow fly. It lands not far from his own. Hiccup is getting the gist of this so well that I can swear that he's already better than me. "The fire didn't spread."

"I think it's because the fire is from a certain Night Fury around here," he says, chuckling. Toothless warbles happily.

"What?" I ask, scratching my head confusedly.

"Night Fury flames are controlled by Night Furies, not the metal," he explains. "He can choose to light or extinguish it as he likes."

"This is awesome," I say, looking at the two of them astonishingly. Too bad the moon isn't lit today; must be the new moon at this time of the month. Either that or the clouds are covering it. "We can actually light these arrows and shoot them."

At these words, a soft ball of fire dances around Hiccup, circling me in circles and emitting a soft glow of blue-red. This must be Toothless's fire.

Hiccup looks at Toothless and the fire in awe.

"That's beautiful," I whisper. Toothless croons. I want to reach out and touch it, but I know that the flame is harmless only to Hiccup- for he is one with Toothless.

****T****

"Power of the Night Fury," Mikata says, smiling. He reaches his tender hand out and grabs the bally fire, but I end the fire just as he does, causing it to dissipat on touch, wisping away into thin air. I warble at his astonished expression. At this, a few lines of thought run through my head like wildfire, repeating itslef over and over again as I desperately try to stop them.

Hiccup knows how to fight now. Nice.

Does he need me now?

I'm sort of still cool, right?

I'm his friend. He wouldn't leave me, right?

I look at Hiccup, whose laughing emotions should be enough to prevent him from looking into my thoughts right now. I try my best to smile, but it's kind of hard to when I'm so scared.

Hiccup knows how to use a bow and arrow now. He knows how to fight from a distance now. I know that it doesn't seem much to you, but to me, it means that Hiccup now has the option of leaving me forever and fending for himself now. Remember, he is immortal. He can't die unless I do- and I've never considered removing it (not that I could). If he can hunt for himself now, he can certainly be alone now.

"Toothless," Hiccup says, his soft hand rubbing my head. I croon questioningly.

"I'm not leaving you, Toothless. Stop looking so worried already."

I look up, staring at his smiling face. As if on cue (it probably is), Sena goes to retrieve the arrows.

W-what? I ask, attempting to hide my thoughts in vain. Has he seen what I was thinking?

"I know that I can shoot a bow now," he says, holding up the deadly weapon in front of me. "But it's not really all that much to let me survive on my own."

You can hunt now, I point out, whimpering.

"I can help you hunt now," he shoots right back, smiling. "You don't eat only fish, do you?"

I- um, I say, thinking of any other kind of animal that I've eaten before. ****_Makro?_****

"Huh?" he asks. ****_Makro?_****

"Tuna!" Sena yells from not far away. I nod in confirmation.

"Oh," Hiccup says, grinning. "Anything that's _not_ fish?"

I dunno, I say. _I just-_

"You're scared that I'm going to leave you, right?" he asks, getting right back to the point.

Yeah, I mumble, slinking my head down to his feet. _And it's not like I can go against you or anything._

"Well, actually, _Stormfly-_"

I'm on him within milliseconds, my feet trapping him underneath me, my eyes slit in passive anger.

You- you- I'm about to say, only to meet up with Hiccup's laugh and smile.

"See what I mean?" Hiccup asks. "You could just topple me like this and I wouldn't be able to go anywhere."

I glare at him until I realize what Hiccup's been planning.

You insulted me just to prove a point? I ask, my fern green eyes resuming their original demeanor.

"Sort of," he says, smiling cheekily. "Sorry."

_Actually, _I_ should be the one saying that,_ I mutter, getting off him. _But if you want to leave-_

"I didn't say anything like that at all, Toothless," he says, putting the bow on the ground and kneeling up to my face. I warble.

Then, you're staying? I ask, eyes lit up expectantly.

"Are you _that_ caring of me?" he asks, rolling his eyes. "The drama king you are, Toothless."

I growl at his failure to answer my question.

"Alright. I'll have to ask you first, then," Hiccup says. "Would you leave me?"

No! I say, my eyes widening in shock at the thought. _Not in a million years!_

"Exactly," he says, smiling. "Neither would I. Who wouldn't want your dry humor and overprotectiveness?"

I warble, even though this is supposed to be a jab at my personality.

Well, your sarcasm proves to be a big factor too, I shoot back. Hiccup chuckles.

"C'mon, Toothless," Hiccup says almost exasperatedly. "You know very well that I care for you as much as you care for me. No matter what I

learn, how much you'd hurt me, or what my life will be, I'm always here for you. Just like you have."

Thanks, I say. _I justâ€¦ you know, you can hunt-_

"I told you," he says, patting my head. "I can help protect you now. After what you've done."

Are you insulting my abilities to fight for you? I ask, snorting.

"No, I just mean that I won't be a stupid little princess cowering behind a noble dragon," he says, holding up the bow. "I'll be right by your side, so we fight alongside each other as equals."

I smile broadly. It's as if we've switched positions, insecure boy and happy dragon, to insecure dragon and happy boy, all because of just a few small things.

"Insecure dragon," Hiccup says, patting my head.

Insecure human, I warble, licking his face.

"Unless you want me to, Toothless, I'm always going to be by your side," Hiccup says, hugging me gently in his awkwardly crouched position.

Unless is like, always, I say, smiling softly as he pulls out of the hug.

Sena comes back at looks at us with a giggling face.

"Don't even," Hiccup snaps at the younger boy, causing me to perk up my ears in inquiry.

What's wrong? I ask, warbling quietly.

"Nothing," Sena says innocently, causing my eyes to slit.

I look into his thoughts briefly, and retract immediately from shock. For some reason, this feeling doesn't feel new, as if someone around here had experienced it before.

"_Toothless and Hiccupâ€¦ Hiclessâ€¦ Toothhicâ€¦ Oh! Toothcup! Yeah! Oh my god, that would be so-_"

I growl at Sena, my fangs bared.

"Oops," the young boy says, smile fading slightly. "He can read thoughts too, right?"

A snarl from me confirms this.

"We're screwed," Hiccup says.

I nod in confirmation. You and Sena are _so_ screwed.

S

"Ah! Toothless! I'm sorry!" I plead helplessly as he grabs me by the

hips with his mouth and carries me back to the cave, leaving me facing the ground as it bounces up and down, each time closer to the ground than before.

A growl from Toothless can only mean _No._ And, to an extent, _You're dead._

The green ground changes to grey as I'm being carried into the cave. Oh, no.

"Please! I didn't mean it-" I say before being dropped onto the ground of the cave. I manage to sit up properly, but only to meet those green, _furious_ eyes.

No wonder why he's called the Night Fury.

"Toothless!" Hiccup runs in, his face half-alarmed and half-amused. "Stop it!"

Another growl. I'm cornered towards the wall as Toothless repeatedly advances on me, his eyes slit in anger.

"Hey! I was kidding! I didn't mean-" I stop abruptly as I hit the cave wall, my back stuck and unmovable due to the looming eyes in front of me.

"Oi! Toothless!" Hiccup says, patting Toothless's scales gently. "Drop it!"

True to his words, Toothless _does_ drop it- he picks Hiccup up and drops him right next to me.

"Hi," I say, waving at him despite his proximity to me. "How's it going?"

"A bit too much on the deadly side for my comfort," Hiccup says, half-smiling.

"Can't you tell him to lay off it or something?" I ask, watching those eyes dance towards me at my words. Toothless shakes his head _no_.

"I'm really sorry, Toothless," I plead again, watching as his eyes near dangerously close to my own. I can almost feel the air rushing in and out of his nostrils. "I know you and Hiccup aren't that way-"

Toothless moves his head down to my chest and gives me a little jab. It doesn't really hurt, because Toothless probably didn't mean it to hurt, but nonetheless, my brain is spinning- and possibly hurt from all the fear rushing through me.

"No- Toothless? Get off me!" I say, but his head doesn't move. In fact, no- his snout is getting warmer.

He's going to incinerate me.

"Hiccup!" I call, turning my head to the side, but he just smiles. _He_ must know what's going on.

Toothless gives me another stare, then closes his eyes and licks me happily.

"Ahh! What?!" I ask, half-shocked and half-relieved by the soft tongue of him licking my face and crooning in amusement.
"Toothless?!"

"He finds your joke funny," Hiccup says, smiling, which gets a croon from Toothless (who is still assaulting me with that fish-smelling tongue of his). "He also thinks you're an idiot. That's why he scared you."

"**_Maldrit_**," I whisper under my breath, remembering that word from before. Toothless immediately ceases his licking and glares at me.

"No! No! Not you!" I say frantically! His eyes slit once again.

"_**Kathot!**_"

Immediately, his ears perk up and gives me a croon.

"**_Kathot?_**" Toothless coos right back, his accent wildly draconic and new to my ears. Well, either that or mine is just terrible.

"Umâ€|" I say, looking at him with uncertainty.
"**_Hai_**."

Toothless warbles happily and gives me another lick on the face. To my left, Hiccup is laughing.

"Sweet," Hiccup says, and I push him lightly for that. Luckily, Toothless does not see me do this.

"I just _apologized_ to him," I mutter, watching as he purrs to himself happily.

"What was that word again? **_Kathot?_**" he asks, smiling. I nod.
"That was neat."

"It's not my fault that I was raised in a village that once had ties to dragons," I snap, blushing furiously. I mean, why does Hiccup have to _compliment_ me when I just said something in a different language?! Where is the grace, the awesomeness, the admirability in _that?!_

"Speaking of which, this means that we'll have to talk to your villagers a bit once we find them, too," Hiccup says, patting my shoulder. "We have to know more about this place."

Toothless gives him (and, despite my denial, probably me as well) a coo.

"I know, right?" Hiccup says, smiling at Toothless. I look _Niison_ curiously.

"What?" I ask, getting up from the cave wall and dusting myself unceremoniously.

"He thanks you for being my brother," Hiccup says, grinning. "He's also excited to see your village."

"For being your _brother_?" I ask, gaping at Toothless. Never, never had I thought that he'd say that. Ever. I've always thought that it was only in my head, the fact that I respected Hiccup like a brother, and Toothless as a brother's- _my_ brother's- friend.

He gives me an innocent look as a response.

****H****

Throughout the whole night, Sena and Toothless take turns attempting to make conversation with each other. Usually it's Sena who will open up a question in Dragonese, or at least the accented form that the Nord use, and then be corrected by Toothless in some form of words.

"_Saknaâ€|_ like?" Sena asks nervously, looking at Toothless's half-smiling, half-amused eyes. The two are sitting opposite of each other, a fire nearby to keep us warm. I'm writing down what they're saying into my notebook- I just hope that my transliterations are right.

Sakna Skii, Toothless coos. Sena nods.

"_O_," he says, scratching the back of his head a smiling.
"_Skii?_"

Maski, Toothless says, giving him a broad smile. _Senachai chkiin esca?_

"Umâ€| _Panem_," Sena says. Toothless nods, and Sena glows with delight.

I roll my eyes. I've already jotted down a lot of their words, but a lot of them don't make any sense at all. I guess you have to learn by asking, not listening. I need to learn a lot of vocabulary first, though.

But, of course, as much as I like to learn, the night also wants me to sleep as well.

The sky is still moonless- giving the impression of pitch-blackness throughout the land. However, in the land of darkness with the absence of light that the moon has failed to give us, us people generate our own sources of light- even though we aren't supposed to. The night is a time of resting, a time where the body relaxes as it goes to sleep. But we light the world up with our little flames and fire, because we can. Because we want to show ourselves in this world, leave a mark of defiance against the nature that we love but also hate.

I lay down close to the Night Fury flames, feeling its (and Toothless's mental) warmth warming me up as I fall into a soft sleep, dreams of Dragonese words flowing through my mind.

****H****

In the morning, Sena and Toothless are fully out from last night's conversation- I can only guess that they were at it for quite some time, judging from how sound they're sleeping. The sun's far more brighter on them than they were yesterday, though, because I wake up so late (which is usual for me, but not for these two. They're hard working people, whereas I'm a hard thinker.)

"Good," I mutter to myself. "More time to wash."

I take off Sena's tunic and head towards the river. There, I wash his clothes and mine, and I even get some time in the water as I wash myself off from all the sweat the day before had brought me. Which, in my own sense, I feel proud again for learning how to shoot a bow; I can even aim a bit, but I'm still pretty bad at it. I should practice more when I can, even if I know that Sena will beat me anyway. He's a born fighter. I'm a born pacifist.

That doesn't mean that I can't fight, though.

It's nearly noon by the time that I get up from the water, and Toothless and Sena are still sleeping. I wonder if they have a clue on just how late they are today.

That's when I get an awesome idea: Why not surprise them with more arrows and metal? If I could get some cloth, too, then I could really make fire arrows. Deadly, but pacifying, fire arrows. Just the drawing of it would send people shivering. It might not be an idea as awesome as the bola shooter that I designed, and certainly nowhere as good as the prosthetic, but both Toothless and Sena would be thrilled. They will be thrilled. Fire, Toothless. Arrows, Sena. Me? Why not both?

With this passionately burning idea in mind, I dry myself off and change into my spare clothes quietly, despite the two of them sleeping very deeply. I grab a slab of Minox lying on the floor (Toothless seems to have burned quite a few previously), sling the bow behind my back, and make my way out towards the market alone.

"Flint, arrows, maybe some thin ropes," I mutter to myself as I enter the market and its already bustling people. "And some bread and spices."

I approach a weaponry shop and show him the slab of Minox. Immediately, his eyes widen.

"What are you willing to trade for this?" I ask confidently. I don't like hurting people, but in trade, it's your concerns that matter the most. To be fair, though, I'm trying not to look too intimidating with the Minox in one outstretched hand and a bow in the other.

"How about a few punches to the shoulder?" a horribly familiar sounds says next to me.

I spin around, not believing what I hear, and when I see the figure before me, I don't believe what I see, either.

It can't be her. The blonde hair, blue tunic, brown skirt must be a coincidence.

It's her.

"A-Astrid?"

* * *

><p>Well! That escalated quickly. Any suggestions you want, please leave them as a review or a PM!

****Glossary: ****

****_Kathot-_** Comes from Ko Thod in Thai. Means "I'm sorry".

>

****_Hai-_** Japanese. Means "Yes" or "Ok".**

Sakna-****** Comes from Sakana. Means "fish" in Japanese.**

Panem- ****Bread.** Comes from Latin.**

Esca- ****Latin for food.****

****Dragonese grammar** (I might get rid of this later if the story calls for it.)**

****1.** Follows Japanese/Thai style of writing. Depends on the sentence (I have yet to decide.)**

****2.** Double vowels at the end of a sentence indicate question. Kin means eat, but Kiin? means "[Do you want to] Eat or not?" etc.**

****3.** Adjectives are strung to the front of the noun.
**

****So:****

******_Maski = Like a lot/love_** (Ma [a lot] + Ski [like] = Maski [like a lot]).****

****_**Sakna Skii- **_**"Do you like fish?" (_Ski_ means "like (an object/person)", comes from Japanese Suki)******

**Senachai chkiin esca- ********"What does [young boy] Sena like to eat?"** (Sena + Chai [young boy] = Senachai [Young boy Sena]) (Cho [like to] + kin [eat] = Chkin (Like to eat))****

9. Girl

****This chapter focuses more on Hiccup's romantic side- which is, of course, going to be awkward.****

* * *

><p>Time stands still for several seconds as I stand and stare at her. The sparse people in the morning time are walking by are minding their own businesses, the merchant that I was talking to earlier is

minding his business, and I wish that I could do anything to make me mind my own business too- not stay paralyzed to the spot and stare at the girl in front of me.<p>

"What? Travel took away your speech?" she smirks, crossing her arms.

Her words do little to lose me out of this reality fantasy- but I do manage to get a few words out.

"What- what- _Astrid?_" I ask, gaping at her and her physique. Her bangs fall just short of her eyes, her mouth curled upwards in a soft grin that I can only compare to the sun's aura of warmth, her words coming out so tantalizingly I cannot force myself to get a grip on reality. Her eyes | her hair |

My imagination is cut short, though, when she gives me a rough punch on the arm.

"Ow!" I say, wincing back in pain. Is it just me, or has her punches gotten stronger?

"That was easy," she grins, acknowledging my abrupt snap out of heaven. "Now, why are you here?"

My head enters thought mode as I realize that my fantasy of her flying after me is wholly stupid and unreal.

"I'm here to search for any news of Toothless's mother," I say, struggling to stay upright from the rush of feelings that the meeting of Astrid usually brings. "What are _you_ doing here?"

"I'm here on trade," she says indifferently. "Trader Johann is somewhere around here as well." How the hell does she manage to stay this calm? Or does she not care?

"He is?" I ask, looking around the market square as people begin to fill up the place. I spot him by the boats, talking to a few fishermen about, from what I can see, fishing nets.

"Yeah." she says shortly. I try to look into her mind to see what she's thinking, and mainly what she's thinking about /me, but my like for her is proving to be a huge detriment to that. All I can hear and feel in her are the winds and seas as she travelled here by boat.

A silence passes through the two of us as we take in each others' appearances once again. It's been so long that we've met, but she's acting like we just met yesterday and that today was just another day that we get to meet.

"Well | no hugs? No confessions of love?" I ask playfully, trying to lighten up the mood.

She cocks a small smile, but does not otherwise move towards me. "It's nice seeing you again, I guess."

Another awkward silence passes and I realize that, unlike the Berk Astrid, this Astrid clearly does not care for showing her emotions in public- even if she may be thrilled. Or not.

"Wait, you didn't come with Stormfly?" I ask, trying to find something to get the conversation moving again.

"I came here with Johann on his /boat," she says shortly. "Stormfly is off Berk for the time being."

"What?" I ask, hiding my very obvious surprise by turning back towards the merchant and giving him the Minox. He looks at me with a toothy grin, as if he too knows what I feel towards the girl Viking.

"I told her that it wasn't safe if it wasn't there," she says dismally. This isn't often that I see her not secure. "They would have hurt her with all the trouble that I've caused."

I grip my bow tightly at these words. Of course the place would not have been safe to Stormfly without Astrid. I've seen the villagers lockup the Zippleback and the Nightmare before, so it's only obvious that a Nadder with only two legs will not be able to escape the bolas when they are sent her way.

It's now, though, that Astrid decides to point out about my latest talent. And, with that, my heart flutters once again, despite her obvious blueness.

"Hey, is that a bow?" she asks curiously, her eyes on the bow. Awesome. She's impressed! Now if only she looked up towards my eyesâ€¦

"Yeah," I say, weighing it in my hands. "I still need a quiver, though."

"A /what?" she asks in inquiry, her head cocked in surprise. I laugh, trying to make the thing look like it's not, you know, all in the interests of getting me a kiss.

"Hold on, I'll get it," I say, turning around towards the shop confidently. "Can you give me a quiver for that Minox as well?"

Sounds stupid for someone who just made a deal, but hey, Minox /is worth a lot. As of lo.

He holds up a perfectly made quiver up for me. "Anything for the young man to please the young lady," he says, smirking.

I glare at him, but after he gives me the quiver (and a free arrow). I sling it over my back, where it joins the bow. Astrid gapes at me in shock.

"You're dealing /weapons?" she asks. With these words, I get another great idea. Why not cheer her up by being alone together? That was what we used to do. We could reminisce some old memories that way.

"I guess so," I say, turning around and waiting for her to follow me. "C'mon, we'll talk along the way."

"B-but-" she stutters. I grin.

"Trader Johann won't worry," I say mischevously, already beginning to walk away and head back towards the cave. There's no way that she's not going to come after me, after all that time that she hasn't seen me. /I certainly feel this way.

I know, I haven't gotten the spices yet, but I'll tell Toothless later. He's going to be /thrilled that Stormfly's friend is around town. "You coming or not?"

"Y-you- oh, fine!" she says exasperatedly, following me in mild annoyance. I smirk, but quickly drops it when I feel her jabbing me on the hips when she catches up to me.

"So, none of thatâ€|?" I begin, but she cuts me off again.

"Nope," she says, an innocent smile on her face. "Just glad to see you."

"You still owe me your collection of travels to be vocalised," I say.

"Ever the man of words," she says truthfully, causing me to blush inâ€| you know, happiness.

"Iâ€| I-"

"I think you should stop trying to fantasize me in your dreams," she says, rolling her eyes playfully. "I'm right /here. And I'm not going to act in any way that will cause you to like me more."

"Iâ€| I didn't say that," I say meekly, the bow and the quiver and the everything I have unable to hide the increasingly obvious (and painful) embarrassment on my face. Why must I do everything and mount up to something like /this?

She only gives me a sweet smile that causes my hands to fidget unnecessarily at my tunic.

Honestly, I've never thought that it would be this hard to walk normally when your crush is talking to you. You suddenly realize how terrible you are, be it that slouchy posture, trembling speech, awkward silence, it all makes you feel very, very nervous. And it doesn't help when she's also openly acknowledging my like towards her (which has grown only throughout the times that I have spent _without_ her. I mean, _Toothless_ definitely likes Stormfly more when she's not around, mainly because he can express his thoughts about her freely).

"Soâ€| really? Can't I feel delighted and everything?" I ask, desperately trying just to get something from her. She's here, and she's not anywhere else. She should kiss me. I should kiss her.

And you can't deny that she's not /hotâ€| I swear, she's gotten slimmer this time. I wonder if her kisses still feel the same, though.

"No," she says flatly, glaring at me.

"Whatever," I say, giving up. Geez.

"Don't be delighted about the conversation that will follow," she says, making my head snap towards her incredibly fast in surprise.

"Huh...?" I ask, my fantasies threatening to be set free again with her almost sad, but /so cute face. I mean, she can be so beautiful no matter her emotions.

"Shut up," she says, glaring at me and my out-of-this-world face threateningly. "Listen."

"Alright," I say resignedly. You don't get around with a girl, after all.

"I was sent here forcibly," she begins quietly.

"What?" I ask, alarmedly looking at her solemn face as she walks. We're out of the market now, so that she decides to speak freely without fear of being overheard is not so unreasonable. But speaking /this?

"Your dad sent me here," she sighs, kicking the dust beneath her feet.

I gape at her in shock. "Excuse me?"

"You heard me", she says. "He told me that I should go on a trade mission with Johann so I could learn how to be a trader, which is," she makes these quotation marks in midair, "'one of the parts of being a leader.'" But I know that he's lying. He wants me out for a while so he can think clearly for once."

When I simply stare at her, unable to take in her words, she continues on.

"I could see his hate for me flowing through him like wildfire. He would have locked Stormfly up the instant I was gone and demand my position for her back. And I wouldn't have been able to choose anything other Stormfly. In short", she says bitterly, "Johann came by and your father decided to teach me a lesson."

I can't believe it. My father, head of Berk, is trying to get rid of my crush.

"Soâ€|" I say, gripping my bow tightly again. "I'm supposed to choose where my loyalties lie, right?"

"Not really," she mutters, staring ahead towards the now-approaching cave. "I already know which side you're on."

I nod, because the painful truth cannot be avoided, and it would be best to not be.

And, from past experience, you should know if I choose girl or father, despite caring for them both. I wish I could just let go of one side, but they're both pretty important to me, and even so I have to choose on a side of the line. Which makes me regret not choosing the other, but if I did, then I'd end of regretting for not choosing the former, which is just a real a headache to think of.

"So, what are you going to do?" I ask uneasily.

"Just hang out with you until the ships are due to sail, I guess," she says nonchalantly. "At least you're better than Johann."

"I amâ€|?" I ask, my spirits lightening up by tenfold at these words.

"Anyway, where did you get this bow?" she asks, looking at me with an impressed expression. "I've never seen you /touch a weapon on Berk wholeheartedly, and now you're acting like it's normal stuff for you now."

"It sort of is," I say, trying to get her into, you know, kissing mood. I can't just /kiss her like this, after all. "I know how to shoot now, you know."

"A _bow?_" she asks, her competitive side kicking in once again. "You sure you can handle something like that?"

"Yeah, sure," I say arrogantly, hoping to make an impression. "Want to see?"

"Why not?" she says challengingly. "No one in Berk knows how to shoot a bow, how could you?"

"Oh, sure-" I say, but I never get to finish my sentence, as I'm knocked to the ground by a young Night Fury who happened to be hiding in the bushes that I just walked past.

"AH!" I say, watching myself as I'm helplessly pinned to the ground by the equally arrogant dragon. And I used to wonder where that arrogance came from.

"Toothless!" Astrid says, appearing above my face as I regain the wind that was knocked from me.

"Hello, Toothless," I mutter, giving him a deathly glare. If only _I_ could breathe fireâ€|

Hi, he says, crooning. _Did I ruin anything for you?_

A lot, I mutter mentally, glaring at him for all he's worth. Which is a lot.

To be fair, you did _give me quite a shock,_ he says, smiling happily. _So I decided to give you a shock as well._

I don't get to retort back at this, for Astrid is looking at Toothless curiously.

"Are you alright?" she asks, giving Toothless a smile. The dragon warbles happily back, giving me a huge lick and getting off me.

"And you didn't ask _me_ that?" I grumble, causing Astrid to laugh.

"I was thinking that the mighty _archer_ could handle his mighty self," Astrid says haughtily. It takes all her physical beauty for me to not glare at her too.

"Hey! _I'm_ the mighty archer here!" Sena says, appearing from the cave path dexterously. Apparently, he's wearing the new tunic that I washed for him earlier. "Hi, m'am."

"Who are you?" she asks cautiously, but drops her suspicions as I get up and walk up to his side.

"Sena, Astrid," I say, gesturing to their respective selves as I say this. "We met him off the islands not far from Berk."

"_Astrid?_" Sena asks, his eyes wide in surprise. "_The_ Astrid that Hiccup's been talking about?"

I glare at Sena, who only looks back at me curiously as if to ask me, "Did I say something wrong?"

"I am, Sena," Astrid says, approaching him and giving him a sweet smile (that makes me jealous). "How did you end up with this crazy guy?"

"I was in the woods and he just happened to find me," he says, causing me to smile.

"It was actually Toothless who heard you first," I point out, causing Toothless to perk up his ears in interest.

"Don't you have a family?" Astrid asks, looking at me disapprovingly. "Being with these two could drive you crazy, you know."

"We also took him on a dangerous flight," I say, laughing. Astrid glares at me, but grins nonetheless.

"It was _fun!_" Sena says, beaming at Astrid. "You've been with him, right?"

"I have," Astrid says, smiling. I can't help but notice that she's glaring at me very slightly.

"Hey, did you know that he's awesome swimmer, too?" he asks, pointing towards the water line. "He taught me how to swim and everything!"

"That's nice," she says. "Say, where are you from?"

"I'm from the village of Nord to the North," he says, pumping out his chest proudly. "Are you from Berk as well?"

"I am," she replies. "Say, aren't you a bit too young to be holding a weapon, though?"

Astrid points to the bow that Sena has been holding for the entirety of the conversation. To be honest, I feel like Sena is a far better converser than me.

"Oh, this?" Sena asks. I can see the astonishment on Astrid's face, as well as hear Toothless's snort which equates to _As if that isn't new to you at all._

"Yeah," she says, being more and more interested by the moment.

Fortunately, she turns towards me. "You taught him this?"

"It's more like the other way around," I say, laughing at Astrid's shocked face.

"So- you mean- _Sena_ taught you how to shoot?" she asks, gaping. I nod, and Sena nods, so Astrid turns towards Toothless instead, who has been silently laughing through the whole conversation. It'll be no wonder that Astrid is going to ask me how to shoot a bow sooner or later.

"This isn't real, right?" Astrid asks. To no one's surprise, except hers, Toothless gives her a Toothless grin.

"This _is_ real," I say, grinning at her expense. "Sena is a fighter, and I picked up some of it up."

To prove a point, I load my bow and shoot the only arrow I have towards the cave, where it lands not far away from the cave. This is the best feeling, when you're impressing someone.

"Nice," Sena says. I hand him the quiver as he says so. Astrid is looking at Toothless, and Toothless is looking at Astrid expectantly.

Where is Stormfly? Toothless says, after holding out all thoughts for so long. I grin at his ever-desire for females. Dragons are so strong, yet so not strong when it comes to girls.

Says the guy with a crush on a _Viking girl,_ Toothless jabs.

"You two can talk to each other in your heads, right?" Astrid says, remembering the events before. Sena looks at her curiously.

"Where did you get that?" he asks. "I thought he never told anyone."

"Well, he told _me_," she says, giggling a bit, causing me to blush heavily. "They could be flirting right now and we won't know."

"Hey!" I say, and Toothless laughs audibly.

"Toothless doesn't _like_ Hiccup," Sena says truthfully. "Toothless likes St-"

I give him a sharp glance and he changes tack with lightning speed.

"Storms," Sena autocorrects. "He told me last night. I can talk to him a bit, too."

"Cool," Astrid says, even though she feels more envy than awe. "It's nice to see all you guys happy, you know."

"Yeah," I say. "It's been a whileâ€¦ huh? Toothless?"

I see Toothless smelling the air curiously, his snout high in the air. _Something smells_, he says. _And it's weird._

"He says something smells," I say, telling the others and their inquiries.

Astrid sniffs the air. "Yeah, something _does_ smell," she admits.

"I don't smell anything," I say.

"Hiccup smells! He has armpit hair," Sena pipes up innocently. Well, at least _he_ thinks it's innocent.

That's when it gets to me. And Toothless's thoughts.

Pheromones.

Not wanting to put up with the awkwardness, I turn away and let the others make conversation without me.

"Astrid?" Sena says meekly, noticing my distant movements. "Did I say something wrong?"

I'm about to turn around and ask why Sena isn't asking Toothless, who is far more reliable than Astrid, when I hear a soft snort by my side.

I can't hear anything, can you? Toothless asks, who is staring at the cave now in the not-so-far distance. I feel a great deal of gratitude towards him as he decides not to pick on me for this one.

Hm, I think.

Well, actually, I'd like to know if she has a clue about Stormfly. Isn't she with her now? he warbles hopefully. I roll my eyes, trying not to show what truth lies in the back of my head.

Yeah, right-

Shh! Listen. She's talking about youâ€¦!

I wish I could perk up my ears like Toothless could- I could have picked up her voice from a mile away. Still, her voice comes in clear from behind my back, where she's happily talking to Sena.

"...Really?" she asks, smiling happily. "And he did all that for you?"

"Yes," he grins, looking at me very gratefully. The things I can feel with my thoughts, I guess.

"He seems nice enoughâ€¦! around you," she says loudly, smirking as if she wants me to hear this.

"He is," Sena says, smiling. "But what do you mean, not good around you?"

"He acts like a loser around me," she says even louder. "He's this absolute coward that doesn't know how to stick up for himself."

Toothless warbles quietly in mirth, earning him a glare, to which he smiles to. If I could threaten him with anythingâ€¦

"Really?" Sena says, a confused expression muddling him. "He's really fearless with me. He's like my big brother."

My face is burning undeniably how now. I want to tell Sena that _No,_ she's trying to make me look bad, don't go along with her, but how do you say that with your crush hearing you?

You should kiss her, Toothless points out, to which I 'accidentally' hit his paw in retort.

Oh? What's this? Toothless growls, turning to face me, his face bared with teeth.

Uh, nothing, I say, backing away slowly. _I didn't mean to, uh, hit your leg..._

Oh, yeah? he says, his eyes slit. _You tried to hurt me, did you?_

No! Um, wellâ€¦ I say resignedly. Thank goodness Sena and Astrid are still talking.

What? Toothless says, cornering me into a tree- all this done so quietly that the pair do not notice.

I mean, uh, I wanted you to shut up, butâ€¦ I say, desperately thinking of something to say. /I'm sorry. I-

Toothless snaps his mouth shut on my arm, causing me to wince instinctively. However, I can only feel the moist tongue of Toothless on my hand. This looks like... a form of handshake, really.

Are you kidding? Toothless suddenly says, cooing softly. _I've hit you so many times before. I just want to tell me that it's ok if you hit me. I won't hold anything against you._

I'll hold it against myself,_ you stupid reptile,_ I shoot back. _Am I supposed to like hurting you or something-_

Shh! he suddenly whispers. A dragon, chirping, now whisperingâ€¦ whoa.

"Are you two good friends?" Sena asks very innocently.

I clench my jaws and eyes shut, determined to hear the answer.

Astrid smiles mischievously. The price of tormenting her is me being tormented, I guess.

"We're pretty close," she finally says. Causing me to grit my teeth in mild disappointment.

Well, better than she said that she refused- Toothless points out, but I push the conversation out of my head and head towards the two.

"Alright," I say enthusiastically, stepping in and breaking up the conversation. "How about we all go in and have breakfast in the cave?" I ask, giving him a very, very, aware smile. I mean, I wish that I could tell him that he's killing me right now, but how I don't know.

"That would be nice," she says, grinning. "I'm not really due until the ships are."

Toothless joins me, warbling at the very-not-so-far-from-the-truth truth.

Well, for your own good, you do _smell,_ Toothless warbles. _Is it because you want to mate-_

"C'mon," I say loudly, drowning out Toothless's thoughts. "Let's go."

Toothless scorches me with a dose of fire, but otherwise doesn't say anything. When Astrid turns around to see the source of the burning, Toothless only looks at her with an innocent stare.

We enter the cave just as the sun makes its first quarter of its cycle. Astrid looks around the cave in impression as our soft footsteps echo loudly throughout the cave.

"Well, isn't this big," she says, settling down by the pile of tunics not far from the fire. We all sit down, me next to Astrid, Toothless intentionally sitting away from me on the opposite side of the fire. I glare at him, but he only gives me a Toothless look back in response.

Sena, though, sits right next to me, plopping himself down with an exhausted look on his face.

"Man, I'm so hungry!" he mutters, his stomach (and pretty much everyone else's rumbling in agreement). "I'll go get the bread."

"Soâ€¦ yeah," I say awkwardly, wishing Astrid would hold my hand or something. "This is where we've been living for a while."

"Isn't it kind of risky?" Astrid asks, looking outside the room nervously. "What if anyone shows up?"

"Toothless knows how to deal with by-passers," I reply shortly. Toothless warbles in response, right after realizing that Astrid had a really, really, bad idea about how Toothless dealt with by-passers. Especially those who don't like dragons.

"I suppose he'd save a few pieces of flesh for himself after he's done," Astrid replies sarcastically, causing the Night Fury to warble happily.

"That wasn't supposed to be a compliment," I say out loud to Toothless, who only closes his eyes and laughs mentally.

"I doubt that it matters, though," she says, absentmindedly accepting the bread that Sena finally brings us. "You're there to knock sense into him if time happens to that."

My face blushes red at these words, by hands trembling as they hold my newly-acquired loaf of bread. Is she complimenting me? Oh, god, this-

"That wasn't supposed to be a compliment, either," Astrid says, punching me lightly with a vindictive grin on her face.

"Oh, _right_," I say, turning away towards Sena, who is sitting down next to me happily once again. At least _he_ understands embarrassment.

"You people," Sena jokes, taking a large and eager bite into the bread. I feel a sense of pride rushing into me as I finally see Sena happy with what he has now.

"So, uh," I begin, trying to ease in conversation again. "How about Toothless?"

"Oh, he-" Sena begins, but Toothless's eyes flash open once. "He's going to get some fish now."

"You are?" I ask, turning towards Toothless accusingly. "What were you doing all this time?"

Oh, stuff, Toothless replies mischievously, getting up and walking out of the room quietly. My eyes follow him all the way out.

/I'm getting back at you for this, I tell him.

/Oh, you do that, he says, warbling and giving me a smile on the way out.

I glance at Astrid, who in turn gives me a what-are-you-looking-at look. I turn back to my own now-measly lump of bread, my thoughts running wild once again. Why is everything that she has always seem better than mine?

A silence dawns over us, broken only by Sena's occasional sound of licking his fingers in delight. I thought conversation was supposed to flow _smoother_ with more people! I wish Sena would get the cue to at least /say something. When he doesn't, probably because he doesn't know, I decide to take the chance myself.

I cross my fingers just in case, though.

"Soâ€¦ it's been a while," I speak at last. Sena has the grace to look around the room as I talk. Maybe he /does know, but he wants me to do this by myself.

"It has," Astrid says, her eyes not leaving her bread.

"You must have been incredibly busy."

"I dunno," she says, brushing her hair to the side. "It's more like I've been watching my back for the past weeks and trying not to get murdered."

"He wouldn't do that," I say confidently. "He'd never kill a villager of Berk."

"I don't look that much Berkian anymore, do I?" she says, taking a vicious bite into her bread. "For all I know, he could be plotting to kill me right now. He doesn't want to do it outright, because then the people would go against him, so he's looking for 'accidents' to happen."

"Dadâ€¦" I say to myself, my thoughts clashing back and forth with relentless force. "Why does he love Berk so much? Why did he never love me?"

"It's not your fault," she says offhandedly. "You can't choose what you're going to be born into."

"I guess so," I say slowly, smiling. I'm glad I wasn't born into anything else, at this rate. If I wasn't the hiccup with a strong sense of justice, I would have never spared Toothless that day. I wouldn't be here as the happiest person on Earth. I wouldn't be here with Astrid.

"Mmâ€¦" a voice to my left says. I turn around and see Sena leaning next to me for support.

"After all that and still no sleep?" I ask, reaching over and patting his back gently. He only mumbles something as he rests his head on the floor next to me, his breathing soft and rhythmic.

"Sena's pretty nice, isn't he?" Astrid asks, her eyes on Sena's sleeping body. He looks so peaceful in his curled up position that I'm convinced that he truly is happy- in fact, his face also harbours a small smile, his mouth curled up slightly.

I silently thank Sena for breaking the awkwardness that was seeping through me and Astrid.

"If only I was his family," I sigh. "He's gotta leave someday, and yet I feel like Berk would have welcomed him a lot."

"Maybe," Astrid says thoughtfully.

"How are the others?" I ask, trying to veer away from this morbid feeling of leaving those you care about. Everyone's going, but we can choose who to go with.

"They're fine," Astrid says. "Fishlegs even likes Ruffnut now."

"He does?" I ask, raising my eyebrows at these words.

"Yeah. How is it like to be here?" she asks.

"It's been nice with Toothless and Sena," I say, smiling (and also glaring) towards the mouth of the cave. "I've never been with better friends."

I pray to the gods that she gets what I mean by that- that she's more than a friend to me.

"You look happy enough," she says, smiling at me. I blush, but not enough for her to notice.

My eyes dart towards her hair- soft, blonde hair that falls perfectly in all the right places, glistening with the aura of a strong girl in the sunlight. Her bangs land in front of her eyes perfectly, shielding her from the view in front of her, but also giving her reign to see more than what just meets the eye.

"So, what are you going to do, now that Berk is an arena for the position of chief?" I ask.

"I'll do my best, I guess", she says. "Your dad is going to do everything he can to stop me, though."

"And all because I ran off with Toothless," I say guilty.

"Nah," she says, her smile appearing on her face once again. "You're happy, Toothless's happy, and even I'm happy. I have Ruffnut and the others by my side. I'll make sure Berk becomes the place I've always seen it as."

I nod, unable to say anything because of the rush of feelings that I get. I'm glad that Toothless is by my side, and I'm glad that there are people who support that.

"Gotten far with finding his mother yet?"

"Sena can speak some Dragonese-"

"Dragonese?" Astrid asks, giving me a confused look. "The language of dragons?"

"Yeah," I say. "So we're guessing that Sena's village may have some clues to where the Isle of Night-"

"The _what?_" she asks frustratedly. She looks cute when she's frustrated.

"The Isle of Night," I repeat patiently. "It's where Night Furies are rumoured to be."

"Coolâ€|" she muses. "So you're going to find them, right?"

"I will," I say. And I will.

"Stormfly is down south," she says after a quiet silence. "Just thought that you should know."

I nod. Toothless certainly isn't going to be happy about this.

"What do you think of the future?" I ask, watching Sena snore softly in his sleep.

"I told you, I want to be the chief of Berk," she replies. She doesn't say that she thinks the future will be beautiful, or the future will be terrible, only that she wants to be the village to Berk.

"No," I say. "After that."

A silence follows as Astrid processes my words.

"After that?" she asks, her eyes raised in questioning. After that, her face falls. "Ohâ€¦"

"What will you do?" I ask. "After that?"

"I wantâ€¦ I wantâ€¦ I don't know," she says, finishing her bread quietly. "There are just so many things that I want to do and don't want to do."

"Any specifics?" I ask, wanting to know of her motives.

"I want to stay on Berk and rule the place," she says. "Iâ€¦ don't want toâ€¦"

"To?"

"I don't want to have kids," she says.

I look at her in shock.

"What?"

"I'm a fighter. I'm tough. I don't think I could do something as tender asâ€¦ raising children."

From what I can see, though, she has more reasons than that.

"More like, you don't want to choose between competitors," I say quietly, realizing what her true motives truly are. She can't decide between a smart boy like me or Fishlegs, or a strong man like Tuffnut. Or even Snotlout.

She gives me a pained look, tears threatening to flow from her eyes.

"Was it that obvious?" she asks, her face hung low.

"I could tell," I say. "Soâ€¦ you don't want to?"

"I don't," she answers. "It spares me the problem of heirs, as well. I don't want to carry my family line. I just want toâ€¦ make things right for once. The dragons can't be kept in cages or dens. They need to be free. Like us."

"Soâ€¦ no kids?" I ask with finality.

"Yeah," she says. "Though I still have emotions."

I smile. Although it hurts me to know that she doesn't want to share a future with me, I am glad that I can continue my journey with Toothlessâ€¦ forever.

"So, yeahâ€¦" I say, looking at Astrid's clear blue eyes. She stares right back.

"You never thought about competition before, then?" I ask, watching as the wind slowly blows her hair to the side. The effect is so mesmerizing that I can swear that she is up to somethingâ€¦ sweet.

"Never. You're already a winner." she whispers, leaning in towards me and pressing her lips against mine.

Her kiss is both gentle and magical all at the same time. There is no tongue licking or caressing, just the touch of lips that press strongly against mine. The mere effect of her wet, soft lips are enough to make me feel like someone wanted, someone needed, someone _loved_.

My eyes widen in shock, but then quickly close again to feel the full passion that this Viking girl has for me. She might be the next chief of Berk, she might not be the next chief of Berk, she might marry with someone someday, she may not marry with someone someday, but as of now, in this very spot, at this very time, she is loved by me, and I am loved by her.

She pulls away from me, her eyes leaking small tears of happiness. I brush them away gently, letting them land onto my fingers. Her tears will not stay there, but her touch always will.

"So, what about _your_ future?" she asks, giving me a smile. "Where will you do?"

"I'll live life," I say after some thought. "I'll find Toothless's mother."

"Of course you will," she says, leaning in to hug me gently. "Just always be happy."

I nod, hugging her back.

"You too."

****S****

I wake up to the sound of cooing.

"Hmm?" I ask groggily, opening my eyes to see Toothless staring back at me.

****_Ku_****, he whispers, more a sound than a word. I give him a questioning look.

He nods his head towards something behind me. I turn around and see Astrid and Hiccup sleeping together peacefully in each other's arms, their heads side by side as they sleep soundly. From Astrid's peaceful eyes, I can see that she has not slept like this for a while. They look so happy and cute togetherâ€| too bad that she's not staying. She could be a big sister to meâ€|

****_Ku_****, he says again. This time, he means for me to go.

I nod, following Toothless out and leaving the pair behind in the cave.

"Have they been like this long?" I ask Toothless.

He nods, snorting rather enviously. I smirk.

"What, want someone as sweet as that?"

To my surprise, Toothless nods eagerly, giving me a soft coo.

"Well, you know what," I say, sitting down next to him by the grass. "Me too."

I touch his snout gently, sending a soft rush of trust flowing in through me. I've hardly ever made contact with Toothless before. I'm scared, actually. But nowâ€¦ well, we're in equal footing at the very least. He warbles in understanding.

"I liked a girl from the market. As soon as I saw her I wanted to talk to her so muchâ€¦ but when I finally did, she said that she had to go. She's probably off the island by now."

Toothless continues to look at me.

"You know, Toothless," I say, leaning onto a nearby tree and watching the bright sky above. "This kind of love doesn't last long. You like them, you feel like everything you do is for them, you want to be with them, but when you do get together, you always leave. I've seen relationships like this before, in the alleys of markets and behind stalls of merchants."

A soft coo of understanding is all I get. I continue.

"But the feeling you get," I say, feeling the soft ground under me with my hands. "The feeling that you're loved and wanted. The feeling that you feel like you are worth something, and something that is worthy of having. Is that feeling worth the pain that you will get after leaving them?"

Toothless gives me a long, questioning look, his ears perked up in interest. He doesn't want to speak Dragonese, nor does he want to say anything. He just wants to listen.

"I mean, the rush of feelingsâ€¦ the love of the moment. It'll be here one minute, and then it'll be gone. You get to be the happiest person in the world, but only for a moment. Then you feel a week's worth of pain. Are those of the same value?"

As an answer, Toothless gives me a soft lick on the face. His tongue feels weirdly warm.

"Hey!" I say, laughing as I wipe the saliva off gaily. "Alrightâ€¦ I was being too sappy. Sorry."

He croons, closing his eyes and giving me a happy look. Like he's in love.

"Stillâ€¦ without this kind of love, this world would be a really, really, dull place," I say. "Even if it never lasts."

And this time, Toothless nods.

* * *

><p>Thank you for taking the time to sit through all of that and reach the end of the chapter.

****For those Hiccup-Toothless friendship fans out there, the theme will greatly return in the next chapter.****

**** As for you Hiccstrid fans, though, I don't do that that much. Sorry.****

****Glossary:****

****_Ku_ go. Comes from Japanese Iku.
>**

10. Governor

****Welcome back!
>**

*** * ***

><p>"Did you really get your food?" I ask Toothless curiously. He doesn't answer, his eyes only fixed into the distance and the sky above.<p>

"Well, in any case, I go get you some", I tell him. He makes of indication of acknowledging my presence, but I get up and grab a fish from the bags anyway. Hiccup and Astrid are still sleeping, and it would take a lot for them to get up. Astrid looks exhausted, Hiccup looks tired, but both lookâ€| happy. They'd make a great couple. They probably will be a great couple, if I'm not jinxing them or anything.

Humans like to believe in jinxes and hexes and curses a lot. It's because everything we observe is true to only us as we see them, but as more and more people agree that they see something, the more accepted the thing observed is. The problem is, if you observe something that you _cannot_ see, no one else can see it, and you have to convince them that it is observable before they believe so. If lots and lots of people believe in the same thing, then people will generally believe that the unobservable is truly observable. For example, no one has ever seen Odin, but since so many people believe him that everyone claims that he is real, and watching us from above, granting us protection and plenty. If you do not observe that object as observable, then it of course does not matter to you. So if you jinx someone unintentionally, and you believe that jinxes are real, then if the event turns out unfavourably, then you feel guilty. If you don't believe it, on the other hand, then you pass it off as coincidence. People who believe and people who don't believe often ridicule each other for their beliefs, and more than often will they get into fights over something that can be observed only by the individual eye.

In short, what you observe is what you observe. No one else's. Even beliefs have varying types of belief, because what each person observes is different from the other, even if it is basically the same thing. Or not.

Such as love for someone else, of course. Unless you make it known to the subject of love, you're not going anywhere. I made the mistake of doing just thatâ€| and then doing the opposite, both to disastrous results. I doubt she even remembers me by now.

When I come out of the cave, I nearly run into Toothless and his solitary figure, still looking into the open blue. I place the find on the ground next to him, hoping that he'll see it when he stops being so quiet and stationary. I wish I could look into his thoughts like Hiccup can, but maybe it's better if I can't.

After all, I'll have to leave them one day. That's why I'm here, isn't it? To be their burden until they can find my village and drop me off.

"Mmâ€|" I mumble. It must be nearly lunchtime now, but I don't feel the need to eat at all.

I suppose that it was the fine bread. Usually I live on stale bread, which isn't nearly enough in providing me energy to go through most of the day. This new kind of bread, thoughâ€| it's like quality bread. It's bread that holds copious amounts of nutrients and taste. It'sâ€| the kind of bread that Hiccup managed to trade in. He could have bought more metal, more of anything, but instead he bought bread. He did it for me. And I'm going to have to leave him one day, and he's doing all this for me.

"Dammit!" I say to myself in frustration. I leave Toothless's side, not wanting to think of him nor Hiccup. I have toâ€| forget them for the time being.

I head over to the trees and begin shooting arrows again. It hurts with every pull of the bowstring, but I press on, hoping that the pain will lessen my stronger and more important pain. I want to get out of the idea of leaving the two, even if it's only something observable to me.

****T****

You might think that I'm thinking about Mother right now. In a way, you aren't wrong. But in a way, like everything everyone has assumed about anything, you are wrong. When it comes to assuming things, no one is ever correct, because the assumption is often inconsistent to begin with. If you think a Night Fury is black, then you're partially, but not totally wrong, because 1. there are so many shades of black (infinitely, actually) and 2. black is the absence of light, and thus doesn't actually qualify for a color. Thus, we tend to judge things as a whole and forget that not everything we assume is correct.

But to be generally correct, I'm thinking about my future.

****_Mirai_****, us dragons call it. I'm thinking about what's happening and what it will do to cause our future.

Yes, **_our_** future. Sometimes I feel like I should ditch the word I completely, because it's just simply not the case anymore. Wherever I go, Hiccup goes. Wherever Hiccup goes, I go. Even if we're not together in person, we'll never be worlds apart. I've told him that before, of course. It's just that his sarcasticness likes to ruin the moment for us.

Anyway, what I wonder about is what the outcomes of this journey will be.

If I find my mother, there will be so many possible outcomes, and many of them are quite difficult to take in.

I might have to stay with Mother, and with Hiccup showing signs of homesickness alreadyâ€¦ I don't want to choose between Mother and Hiccup. Sure, he's the best friend I've ever met, but Mother made it all possible for me. Without her, Hiccup and me would have never met, because there would be no me either. I can't be separated from either of them. If Hiccup stayed, he'd miss homeâ€¦ and Astrid. If I left, I'd be betraying motherâ€¦ Iâ€¦ I don't know.

Even more, Mother might not even remember me. She might have never seen me since my birth, so who will I be to her when I'm with so many other Night Furies? I've heard of dragons hurting other dragons that aren't their children or friends, and if she attacks meâ€¦ I've never seen a fully grown Night Fury, let alone one angry before.

And, to be honest, I might not find Mother alive. If I found out that she no longer exists physicallyâ€¦ I'd break. Not because the adventure Hiccup and me had to go through had been for naught, but because the final spark that has kept me in hope for seeing my mother that I had never seen, but heard, and thus given me all this will to continue, will be extinguished.

I might even become an outcast to the Night Furies for being with 'humans'. Let's not forget that. But if that happens, I will leave, because Hiccup means much more than a group of arrogant dragons, and I will make sure Mother sees me before I leave. Maybe she'll even come after meâ€¦ I don't know. I don't know a lot of things, actually.

"Hey, Toothless."

Hm? I say, moving from my position and looking towards the source of sound. I don't even realize that I've been stuck in this standing position for such a long time that my legs are starting to ache. I sit down, noticing a seasoned fish on the ground in front of Astrid.

"That's not mine. I think Sena brought you that," she says with an unusually grim smile.

I nod, picking it up gingerly and eating it bit by bit, bite by bite. I listen to Astrid as I eat.

"I'm going to be leaving soon," she says. "I just wanted to say a few things."

Such as? I say out of habit, my ears perking up in attention.

"First, I wanted to sayâ€¦" Astrid takes a long breath. "Thank you for taking care of Hiccup. He looks so happy around youâ€¦ sometimes I think that he's happier with you than with me."

I nod, urging her to continue. It's peculiar that such a stuck up girl would be saying things so sentimental to me.

"But in a way, I'm glad if that's true. If Hiccup is happy with you, then he won't worry about me that much. He can be with you on your

adventure and not care that much about me... And I won't have to worry about him either. I know that you can protect him. That way, you can, make sure he's safe. You can talk to him, right?"

I nod again.

"Tell himâ€¦ that Berk is always happy to see him again," she says. "Andâ€¦ that I like him. A lot. He asked me for a confession earlier, but I haven't the courage to tell him in person. Can you pass on the message?"

I warble questioningly.

"Iâ€¦ I can't," she explains. "I'm a fighter. I can't say something that tenderâ€¦ no. Can you please tell him this?" she asks pleadingly. I see Hiccup standing not far from here, looking at us two converse. She must have asked to talk to me personally. Well, if she cares that muchâ€¦

I nod.

She smiles happily and nods as well. "Thanks. I have to go now," she says. "Johann must be looking for me by now."

I coo in farewell, watching as she runs towards Hiccup, whispers something to him, gives him a peck on the cheek, talk to him about something, and waves goodbye as she runs back towards the woods.

I watch as _Mikata_ walks slowly towards me, a not-so-surprising-at-all smile on his face.

"Hey, buddy," he says, patting my snout gently as I snort.

_She doesn't even _look _decent_, I greet happily. _Seriously?_

He rolls his eyes. "Honestly, as long as _one_ girl likes me, I still have a hope in getting married," he says, rubbing my sides gently. "C'mon, let's go."

Go where? I ask curiously. I sense a rush of fear chilling through him. I perk up my ears in surprise.

"The cave," he says nervously.

Why? I ask questioningly, following him slowly as he accompanies me back towards the cave.

Then his next set of unspoken words take me by surprise.

"_We're being closely watched,_" he thinks quickly. "_Astrid says they spotted you a few days ago and they want to capture you. She says they've got weapons trained on us as we speak._"

What?! I ask, looking at him with the most forced look I've ever made. It takes a lot for me to not grab Hiccup and Sena and bolt right now, the bags inside the cave the only thing keeping me from acting upon my reactions to this turn of events.

"_Just get to the cave,_" he thinks. "_I'll go get Sena without drawing attention._"

Drawing attention? I ask, sniffing the area around me. That's when I feel them; the sweat of humans, the metals of spears, the bloodlust of death.

"_Yes,_" he thinks, hastening his pace. I can feel the tension rising as we walk right now.

I can fight them," I say, slitting my eyes to find any assailants in the vicinity. I can sense them, but I can't pinpoint them. I could shoot them all if I can just get them into my sightsâ€|

"No," he says out loud, before quickly realizing his mistake. "We'll have fish later." Then, in his mind, "_They'd hurt Sena. And me."_

The situation at hand demanding all the more, I find it hard to not roll my eyes.

We halfway through to the cave now. Hiccup nudges me towards the cave as he goes to collect Sena.

If anything happens to youâ€|" I growl, my claws extending slightly in aggression.

"I'll do my best," Hiccup whispers, walking towards Sena in the most casual way possible.

I walk into the cave nervously, wondering if this was how the hunted felt. My mouth rushes to grab any outlying objects it can and deposit them into the bags. I grab the nearby hanging tunics and lay them not far from the mass of objects that my large mouth cannot pick up by the mouth, as thus is resorted to scraping along the floor with my snout. My mind rushes with caution and anger as I take time to realize that we were never safe here from the start, that they must have had their eyes on me from the start, that I was a danger to these two boys from the start. My eyes slit briefly and I vent out my anger by shooting a blast into the ground near me. It leaves a small hole near the center of the collision, a sign of my fury. And to think that I can't fight themâ€| is Hiccup crazy? Of course I could shield both of you and take them down. To think that I can't-

"AHH!" Hiccup's voice pierces the open air. I rush to the mouth of the cave just in time to block a heavy chunk of rock thrown his way with my wing, the piece of metal clanging loudly to the floor as it falls uselessly from my wing's interception. I snarl viciously at the thrower, my inner flame preparing to shoot a blast of plasma at the beast who dared try to hurt Hiccup- that is, until Hiccup pulls me right back.

"They've got Sena," he mutters furiously. "They came out from the trees and grabbed him."

What?!"

My eyes race frantically for the younger boy, and I see him being locked in a standing position by two large men, his feet struggling uselessly to get free. Sena has been close with me lately- I can't let him die. My mind flashes red, my impulse threatening to take over-

"NO!" Hiccup says, tugging at the saddle. "Don't shoot! They'll hurt Sena!"

I give him a glare and forcefully walk backwards back. If only I wasn't so into my head earlier, I would have sensed this...

Let me get them, I say, roaring angrily at the devils outside. _Let me shred them all._

"Toothless, don't," he says forcefully. "It would do more harm than good."

How-

Just as I clear from the opening of the cave, a huge net descends on the mouth, covering the entirety of the entrance with laced strings and ropes all delicately tied to make the trapping equipment, 2 pegs to the side driven instantly to the ground preventing any kind of escape.

I've always been the hunter before, I say to myself. I've never been under this kind of pressure. I can't fight without getting the others into troubleâ€¦ but all I've ever done is fight. and stalk.

Now I can't do either of them.

My ears droop slightly as the rage inside me seeps away and is replaced with guilt. If I was out there in time; if I could have just held them off for long enough for Sena and Hiccup to get awayâ€¦

Hiccup, I'm sorry- I begin.

"No, Toothless," he says, leaning backward and grabbing a bow, his eyes never leaving the scene unfolding in front of us. "Focus on what's at hand."

Despite this, though, at least it was _Sena_ who got caught. I'm not saying this because I don't care about him, but because if it was Hiccup that got captured, I would have hurled towards the assailant with all my might and taken him down there. And no doubt would that cost Sena.

I glare at the mouth of the cave for all it's worth.

Dammit, I say. _I just can't- can't do freaking_ anything!

I lash my tail angrily at the ground, making sure that my still living tailfin alone receives the impact of the ground. Hiccup pats my sides gently, an arm slung over my neck in worry.

"We'll get through this," he says. "Just stay calm."

At his words, which I always believe to be true, be it the most sarcastic or most impulsive of sayings, I fall silent. I can only whimper at what I'm seeing ahead of me.

I see several people walking towards the mouth of the cave, and us somewhere in the middle of the cave itself. It would be no doubt that

the whole cave would collapse in if they tried to blow it up- which would result in a terrible fate.

Even dragons have a limit to how much weight they can sustain above their shoulders.

"Let me _go!_" Sena's pained voice rings out, his struggles getting louder and louder to our ears as he approaches the mouth of the cave- along with someone that Hiccup vaguely described to me the first night that we were on the island.

The Governor.

****H****

Of all the dangers that I thought I'd be facing when Astrid whispered those words to me, I had not expected one of the people that I am closest to to be used against me. My brain just shut down the instant Sena got caught. I knew that I couldn't go in, for it get both of us captured, and no one would be able to defend Toothless, especially if Toothless is impaired by me and Sena being held hostage. Dammit, why am I so powerless?!

You aren't, Toothless says, cooing softly. _You did what you could._

"Yeah, by letting Sena get captured like _this?_" I say, glaring at him.

You're the main reason why I still have hope, Toothless snaps. _Now please stop whining and talk to the Governor._

"I swear, Toothless-" I begin, but I never get the chance to finish it.

"Why, hello, Hiccup!" the Governor's large voice booms from the mouth of the cave, his large body walking past the two henchmen that hold Sena. "It's been such a pleasure to meet you!" His face is smiling, of course. He's got a hostage right in his hands. Or, at least, in his subordinates'.

"Why do you want Toothless?" I spit at the Governor. "What has he done to you?"

"My dear Hiccup," he says, giving me the most intimidating smile he can, which I don't buy at all. "Why do you think I welcomed you and this young boy here with open hands in the first place? My scouts reported your gorgeous Night Fury here the second you arrived on the island. We've been looking for the best opportunity to strike ever since, but either you or Sena were always in the way. We listened in on what that stupid girl was saying-"

"Don't you _dare_ call Astrid stupid," I say angrily. "She was the one who warned me about all this."

"Did she?" the man asks, raising an eyebrow in amuse as Sena flails against the giant arms of the men holding him hostage. "Well, she will not be welcome here long after this. If we knew where she came from, we would definitely send an armada for her. But as of now, I find your anger and fear far more worth indulging in."

"Give me back Sena," I spit at him, my hands clutching the bow tightly. Toothless growls, and for once, I don't stop him. "Don't you dare hurt him."

"Only if you give me that Night Fury of yours," the Governor says, smiling evilly. "Then no one would need to get hurt."

"Toothless is someone too!" I yell, my voice echoing through the cave.

"Oh, so you gave it a name?" the Governor taunts. "Well, in that case, you should forget it now. Night Furies have the most powerful blood..."

"What makes you think that?" I yell, gripping Toothless tightly as he makes to attack the man several feet away from us, separated by a barrier of ropes and humans. "You've never even seen a Night Fury before!"

In my mind, though, I think something else.

"Think of something", I think to Toothless urgently. I'll buy us some time."

Already on that, Toothless answers, sneering at the men in contempt.

"We've heard of tales far and wide," he begins, puffing out his shirt proudly. "That the blood of each dragon contains specific properties. Gronkle blood can make the drinker much stronger. Nadder blood boosts the beauty and charisma of the consumer. and Night Fury bloodâ€¦ puts you at the height of human intelligence. We have yet to extract the latter in our lives, so your 'pet' hereâ€¦ will be delicious."

"You're all wrong!" I yell, pointing at all of them in disgust. "Dragon blood and human blood are the same! You don't get anything but sin from drinking the blood of a fellow creature that roams the Earth! And he's not my pet!"

"In every sense, he is," the Governor says haughtily. "He listens to what you say. He is always quick to defend you. He has never once left a place that you wouldn't think he wouldn't be in, no? What does that make your dragon, if not a pet?"

"He's a friend!" I yell, pain welling up inside me at these piercing words. Have I really brought this upon myself and Toothless? "He's not a pet!"

Hiccup- Toothless's voice comes in, but I stop his flow of thoughts momentarily.

"You idiots have never," I say, my hands shaking, "Never, felt the need to care about someone deeply. You've never needed to think of what it might feel like to wake up and know that your life will be secure and safe. All you think of is profits and opportunity. You'd be willing to give up something you care about for a sum of useless money."

"Ho! You think money is useless!" he booms right back. I see Sena panting from exhaustion. "Money is what makes this market possible! Money is what started the trade between the northern islands, what tied us together in commerce and discovery!"

"I don't care!" I yell. "None of you know what it's like to know a friend! None of your smiles are innocent, none of your thoughts lack the thoughts of profit!" My eyes flare with the fire of a Night Fury. "You're all nothing but heartless, soulless, brainwashed, money-hungry monsters! Toothless's blood is purer than all of you _combined!_"

Hiccup Toothless coos softly. I ignore him.

This finally makes a dent into the Governor, whose smile fades slowly and is replaced by a snide look.

"So_ I take it that you're not going to hand over the dragon," he says.

"Never," I say firmly, "I'm never going to stoop that low."

The governor smiles sadly.

"You must have forgotten that we still have what you think of dear in our hands," he says, pulling out a knife from his pocket and leaning close towards the wide-eyed Sena. "It would be a shame if you didn't stoop this low_ just to lose more than just your pet."

"Hiccup, just forget about me!" Sena yells. "Just grab the stuff and go! You can just shoot through the neta!"

My eyes flash white in shock at Sena's words. The Governor lands a punch to his stomach, causing Sena to gasp for air painfully.

"Sena!" I yell, trying with all my might to not lunge towards the devils.

"Ah, so you think life is something you can take off so easily, eh?" the Governor grins. "You'd be the perfect slave for us, Sena. No one from your village will remember you after what we'll do to you."

As these words of anguish and mockery sink in slowly, I realize that Sena, who already thinks little of life, is wanting to let his own life be taken for the sake of mine. He has always been a fighter, but a noble one at heart. In short, he's going to trade his life for mine and Toothless's.

I'm not going to let that happen.

"No way," I say. "Either we make it out together, or we die together."

Toothless nods in agreement, in his head already narrating a plan for me.

"Oh ho! So you think you're going to watch your friend die like _this?_" the Governor says, holding the knife up to Sena's neck. "You sure you're not going to trade an animal for a human?"

I give him a sad look, holding up my bow at long last. "Yes."

I point the bow directly at the Governor, and in turn Sena, who has been relinquished from the men and now a human shield for the leader of this market port. Sena looks at the bow fearfully.

"...Hiccup?" Sena says, his eyes wide in disbelief. "Are you going toâ€¦?"

"So indeed you do fear death," the bulky man says. "So, are you sure you are going to shoot your friend? You know very well that your attempts to die as well will only benefit us."

Sena looks at me, his eyes wide in fear.

"I'm sorry," I say grimly, drawing up an arrow. "But we live or die together."

****S****

I fix my eyes at the bow in fear. Is he really going to do it? After all that had happenedâ€¦

I should have known that the Governor was up to something. His smiles, his greetings, his offerings, they were far too close. Traders never do anything if they don't make a profit out of it. He must have known that there was more than just some measly Minox in our coming- he might have seen us the moment we landed! And now I'm stuck in the worst position of all three of us.

I look at the bow again, Hiccup's hand stretched out in a position to fire. My own bow is lying uselessly on the ground.

"Hiccupâ€¦" I say. I don't know what to say. I want them to rid me as a burden they they won't have to hold anything back when they escape, and I know that in Hiccup's hands alone I'd be willing to die in, but is he really going to kill his friend in order to escape?

I mustn't think like that. I got everyone into this mess, and I'm going to take the consequences alone. It'll be painful, butâ€¦ at least I'll be happy in the knowledge that I helped somebody.

Sick thoughts, yes. Hiccup once told me that I had little to live for. And he was right; I was never cared for by anyone. I had to hunt, steal, and fight to survive, but I only did it because I didn't want to die. I've seen people starve to death on the streets, I've seen friends being taken away by the authorities for ransom, and I don't want to be them. Hiccup may be the only thing that I live for nowadays, but if he's going to be the one that ends my misery, then I don't think it'll be as bad as becoming a slave on the many ships that pass by here.

But will he kill me? I don't know. Has he the heart to do it? Have I the heart to throw away my life so easily?

Regardless of my thoughts, Hiccup draws the arrow onto me and gives me a small smile.

Sarcastic to the end, I think. Or to my end.

I close my eyes and listen as the arrow flies towards me. At the last second, I hear the sound of a firebolt headed my way, too.

Suddenly, a lurching sound from behind me forces me to open my eyes. I feel something blunt hit my stomach, and something warm blazing about through my body, but causing me no real harm. I look at myself and see blue, lukewarm flames engulfing my entire body, the arrow lying uselessly on the ground. I can see a few specks of flame rising above my eyes, giving the smell of scales. Is this Toothless's?

"Sena! Quick!" Hiccup yells. Upon hearing his voice, I realize that he has not killed me, and that I am still very, very much alive.

I focus my senses quickly and see all the men that were supposed to be cornering me- including the Governor- spread out a good distance away from me in shock. They seem to be more stunned than afraid of the what's happening, which is something that even I don't know what's happening, but I have no time to talk.

I pick up a fallen spear from the ground and swing it viciously towards the first man that staggers up to me slowly.

"Don't you dare touch me," I say, letting him watch as my body continually burns with the flames that do not harm me. I feel the adrenaline running through me as I take on a fighting stance, ready to strike at anyone who has harmed me before.

I hear a shink to my side and jump out of the way just as a large sword comes slamming down to where I was seconds ago. Out of the corner of my eye, I see Toothless burning away the net that blocks their escape, Hiccup grabbing the rest of the bags as fast as he can and hitching them onto the dragon. If I can buy them some time, we might get out of this alive.

"Don't make me hurt you," I say, smirking slightly as I flex my hands on the spear. At least I look worthy to fight.

I receive the next blow of the sword with my own weapon, a clang emitting from the force of impact. I shove the sword back forcefully, causing the man to stagger back in shock.

"No! He's just a little boy! He can't be that strong!" the Governor yells from somewhere nearby. My ears pick up his presence, but I feel no intentions from him to strike. And I don't think my spear would get through all that fat anyway. If only I could put enough distance between everyone to use my bow...

As the swordsman runs at me again, I slash through the air in front of him, forcing him to bring his sword up to intercept it. For several moments, the battle is only us two dashing about, twirling blade on blade and skill on skill. As he slams his sword down again, I pull it back and do an uppercut slash, knocking the sword off-balance and causing him to once again fall back.

"Hmm," I say, smirking at him. "You're no match for me" and Toothless's power."

I can understand that it is Toothless's fire that has given me so

much strength above these people, but it is also to my own skill that I can fight them off. Had I not have this power, of course, I would have been far more cautious of who I was up against. Especially since their ages must be double of mine.

I dodge to my right as an attacker jumps from behind me, flailing madly. In that instant, I'm knocked to the ground from the force of impact. The flames are slowly dying down, as well.

A mighty sword comes swinging down my way, a true sign of execution.

I hold my spear in both hands tightly and hold it out just in time to block the impending slash of death. The man's arms are stronger than mine, as I anticipated, and I'm not going to be able to hold out for much longer. I kick at him, but he simply steps aside and gives me a hard kick to the side, sending a sharp pain running through my leg.

"Nng..." I say, trying hard not to recoil from the injury. The sword is still suspended above me, held in place only by the spear that I use to hold my lifeline. My hands are shaking, and the last of the fire is burning out. I'm not going to be able to hold out for long-

Suddenly, a huge arrow flies through and makes its mark just at the torso of my executioner.

As he howls in pain, I use this time to roll over and get up, smacking him with all my force with the blunt side of the spear, the side that I managed to hold onto as I got up. Had it been the other side I used, he would have been dead now.

Out of pain, though, I get down on one knee and grip my throbbing leg tightly.

"Owâ€|" I say. I see the fighters assembling in front of me once again, ready to take me out for good. I don't have any more flames; I can't fight people this strong alone.

As the first man charges towards me, though, another arrow lodges itself deep into his shoulder. He falls back, gritting in pain.

"Sena!" I hear footsteps rushing through the sand towards me. "Get up!"

"Hiccupâ€|?" I ask, looking up to Hiccup's outstretched hand. I can see him bruised in parts. His tunic is tattered, for sure. He must have gotten Toothless's flames and fought throughâ€| for me.

"There's too many of them," he says. "We're not fighting them."

"Iâ€|" I say, grabbing his hand tightly. I use every ounce of energy I have to try to get up, but I simply fail to do so, my legs refusing to stop throbbing from pain and fear.

"Well, it looks like you're cornered," the Governor says, walking up

towards me and Hiccup. Around me, I see spears being trained on us as reinforcements arrive. "We know your pet is grounded. He cannot save you from a wall of people this thick. Any last words?"

"I can't be sure," Hiccup says, smiling, one hand on the bow, one hand on my arm. "How about I ask you?"

"What do you mean-" the Governor says. Or, at least, tries to say.

Hiccup lets go of my hand and grabs an arrow so fast that he might have summoned it from midair. Instantly, a burst of flame finds its way into the arrow's tip, igniting the whole bow- and Hiccup himself.

"You'll see," Hiccup says, firing the arrow straight into the ground.

Right away, flames spread out from the center of impact dangerously, creeping inch by inch away from the arrow as it flows out onto the ground, creating a large and enlarging circle that engulfs us in. The men begin to spread out, though one is unlucky enough to let the flames touch him- his foot instantly burns blazingly, causing him to shriek in pain. The rest of the men decide to bail out from the onslaught of Toothless's fire, scattering in groups as Toothless himself arrives next to Hiccup.

"Ku, Sena," Toothless coos. My leg feeling better now from the cooldown, I get up. I can feel the flames at my feet, but I feelâ€¦ nothing, actually. Except for the warmth of the fire that has forced the Governor and his henchmen on the defensive.

"Alright," I say, grabbing Toothless's side and hitching up behind Hiccup. Toothless spreads his wings wide, but just as he is about to leave, the Governor rushes towards us- the flames are already dying. I pull up my bow defensively to hold them off.

"Wait! I'm sure we can make a deal out of this," he says, his face desperate. For profit, as usual. "Is there anything left that you'd like to offer? We will remember it next time your village stops by and visits."

"Just so you know," I say, reaching into a bag and pulling out a slab of Minox. To Hiccup, the metal is of Toothless's creation. To the Governor, it's nothing but a new kind of metal that can be traded for anything in the world. "I'm not here with my village. And I doubt that you'd see much of me again. So-" I hurl the Minox straight towards his face, to which he cowers to dodge it. "Goodbye."

Hiccup opens the tailfin with a small click. Toothless takes off into the sky, shooting upwards with immense speed as we leave the port city, the marketplace, and the money-hungry merchants for the sky, the wind rushing past us like we were meant to be up here all along.

For a while, none of us say anything, still processing the fact that the Governor had betrayed us all, and how we never saw it coming. But naturally, this kind of thing is not to be spoken, as the effect affects us all, and we have no one to blame but ourselves for it. Of course, what we would speak is only about the aftermath and what we

will do next.

Hiccup is the one to break the silence.

"Is your leg okay?" he asks, looking back at me with a concerned look on his face.

"It's not going to kill me this time," I say jokingly, hugging him tightly as Toothless picks up speed. He really must want to get away from that place.

"That's great," Hiccup says, smiling slightly. "Look, Sena, I'm really sorry-"

"For saving my life?," I ask, resting my head gently on his back. "Nah. I should be thanking you."

"In that case," Hiccup says, turning back to face the sky before him, "Thanks."

"For what?" I ask curiously.

"For being a totally innocent little bugger," he says, laughing. I laugh as well, hugging him tightly and falling asleep.

****H****

"Toothless," I ask, watching as he silently stares at the passing water and air. "Are you there?"

I can't believe I couldn't do anything, he says, gnashing his teeth in frustration. _Especially when you fought your way in to help Sena. You must think I'm weak._

"You were anything but weak back there," I say honestly, thinking of Sena, whose skills with the close combat weaponry saved us all. "You managed to keep yourself calm until things turned our favor."

Still, he mutters. _I'm sorry._

"I just told Sena that," I say, rolling my eyes. "You don't have to be so protective of me, alright? I'm _fine._"

If I had known all you two did at the port amounted up to thisâ€¦ he growls.

"Well, on the bright side, we only managed to sell a little bit of Minox," I say, grinning and patting his sides gently. "The price of Minox will still be incredibly high, so that'll be useful to us if we want to sell here again."

Rightâ€¦ Toothless says, ears drooping slightly. I sense his anxiety right away. In my own mind, of course, I begin to feel anxious as well.

"What's wrong?" I ask quietly. "Why are you so quiet?"

I'mâ€¦ I'm angry at myself,_ he says hurtfully. If I have ever known

someone who is more honest to his feelings than Toothless is, then I know nobody. _For letting the governor's men hurt you._

"Toothless-

You're immortal because of me, he continues. _It's only fair that I help keep you that way. I can't just be happy knowing that I hurt you._

"Well, I'm mad at myself, then," I sigh. "For making you feel bad."

His ears droop even more. I didn't know it was possible for a dragon's ears to be practically glued to their head.

Noâ€¦| don't feel bad because of me, Toothless whimpers quietly. _I-__

"Then don't feel bad because of _me,_ Toothless," I say, leaning over and hugging him tightly. Sena's locked tightly enough behind me to be in any real danger, so I just let my hugs soothe him as he too begins to coo. "I care about you, alright? You've always meant the best for me. It would be a waste to get angry over something that you couldn't control."

I was worried about you, he says after some thought. _I thought you were going to get hurt._

"It's in hurt that we find care from others," I say. "It's also in hurt that we can get stronger. I want to protect you, Toothless. I want to get stronger so I can protect you."

After a moment's silence, Toothless nods.

Me too, Toothless croons, grinning as we finally come to a mutual agreement.

"Seriously," I say, getting up and rolling my eyes. "It's as if you forgot that you told me of your plan at the last second and ignited Sena with _my_ inner flame because I'm closer to him and instead focused on how you were focusing so much on keeping that flame intact for long enough for me to get in. Seriously?"

To make a long story short, he says, _yes._

"Amnesic dragon," I mutter. Toothless warbles in response.

* * *

><p>First of all, thank you guys all for supporting me with your comments on each chapter. They mean a lot and have proved to be powerful sparks that have ignited me to pull out more and more for each chapter.

**I'm sorry that this chapter may not meet your expectations (i.e. the Toothless-Hiccup friendship theme, which I tried to put in while simultaneously making sure the plot advanced), but if you've come this far with me, you know where I like to go with this kind of stuff. **

****Any, _Mirai_ is Japanese for future.****

****Alright! Now, I want to rant about something:****

****I'm really going to go ahead and tell you guys that I fear for the next movies of HTTYD, because they feature Hiccup as more of a late teen than a mid teen, meaning that my fandom will be highly shunned due to the next set of fanfictions that will come out for FF will be about late-teen Hiccup, not the mid-teen Hiccup (which I feel most comfortable with, because I based Hiccup to be a bit older than me and Sena a bit younger). This might be selfish, but I really love my work and my portrayal of Hiccup, and I don't want the movie to change it (all that much). What do you guys think?****

11. North

****Hi, hello, and thank you for stopping by to read this story. A lot of you guys might think that this story is misleading, because it clearly says 'Adventure' on the front tag, but this story is based more on the life of them as they search, not the main points in finding that you would normally put in. The problem with a lot of stories is that they get to the point, and to the point do they lose the ability to develop characters and give them looks to what happens in between these events.****

****So! Hi. And enjoy this story.****

*** * ***

><p>Hey, I have something to ask you, I ask Hiccup. The sun, as usual, is in its late afternoon phase, which just seems to be the time where the most of things happen. Maybe it's because it's the most comfortable time for fate, or maybe it's just that I and Hiccup like the afternoon a lot. Maybe the sky is just like that. This trip might be quite long; I can't see land anywhere.

"Eh?" Hiccup responds, holding onto the saddle lightly, his feet placed on the mechanism and unmoveable. "What's wrong?"

Not really, I say, cocking my head to the side in a representation of the human 'shrug'. _Just wanted to kill time._

"Oh, okay," Hiccup answers, smiling. "What is it?"

Um, wait- I'm not disturbing you right now, am I? I ask anxiously.

"Not at all," Hiccup says, yawning. "I mean, there are a lot of people here who I can talk to or think about."

Oh, alright then, I say, my face falling. _I'll let you back to your-_

"That was a joke," Hiccup snaps, giving me a disapproving smile. "And besides, I'm always here for you. You always are for me, anyway."

Right, I say, snorting and cooing in appreciation. _So, what's it

like to be human?_

"What?" Hiccup asks, laughing. "You mean to not have wings and not have mind reading and not love fish?"

Yeah, I say, warbling.

"Wellâ€|" he muses. "It feels normal."

Normal? I ask, snorting. _I find it a terrible pain to not be able to breathe fire. And fish! If I didn't like thatâ€|" what would I like?_

"You would like bread," he mutters. I shake my head in mock fright.

How do you not like fish, Hiccup? I ask. _It's the food of the gods. Well, your gods. I don't believe in a god, even if you do._

"I believe in a lot of gods," Hiccup says stoutly, not answering my first question and picking out a piece of bread and chewing on it, "But I believe in you more, Toothless."

Touched I am by his words, I find his innocent intentions worth picking on.

Aww, romantic, are you? I joke. _Say that to Astrid._

"Shut up," Hiccup says. "I'm trying to be a good friend here."

Whatever, I say with mirth. _Mikata._

I take a moment of silence as I croon happily and Hiccup hands me a fish.

"You don't get to make buildings and weapons and equipment, though," he continues, holding up the bow. I can sense him holding it in his hands, anyway.

That would explain why we all live in caves and forests, I say. _But we trade our dexterity for intelligence, which is something that you don't have._

"Oh, yeah?" Hiccup says, smirking. "Prove it."

Shot limit of a Skrill, I shoot at him.

"Four," he replies confidently.

Wingspan of a Night Fury, I say.

"48 feet," Hiccup says. "Trust me, I know you."

False, I say, smiling with vindictive pleasure. _7_ *_Va_*. _I win._

"What?" he asks, pulling out his notebook and reading the Night Fury page. I must be a celebrity on Berk. "It says hereâ€|" 48 feet. I can measure right now, if you want."

_7 __**Va**__ is the length of my wingspan,__ I warble. _What are you bumbling about feet? Surely forty-eight of your feet will not match my two wings._

I do the math in my head, and I'm right. As usual.

"_What is a __**_Va_**?" Hiccup asks confusedly. I can sense a /little bit of hurt in there, but I'm going to keep on pushing on it. After all, I _am_ a Night Fury.

_A __**_Va_** _is the measurement of the length of twelve quarters of a Night Fury wing,__ I explain haughtily. _Dragons know Night Furies for that._

Which is true; my time under the Queen's control often involved dragons asking me how long my wings were.

I sense Hiccup do his puny computing in his head.

"So, 6 feet meanâ€| 1 __**_Va_**?" Hiccup asks questioningly. "That should sound closeâ€|"

_Your feet doesn't equate to one-sixth of a __**Va**__,_ I point out.

"Not _my_ feet," Hiccup says, rolling his eyes. "It's a form of measurement. Based on human feet."

_Human feet are not consistent,__ I point out, smiling with pleasure.

"Night Fury wings are not consistent either," he shoots right back.

Oops.

At this realization, my ears droop in defeat, my eyes half-closing sadly.

"Gotcha," Hiccup smirks.

Rrrâ€| I let out a long growl, then sigh and continue the flight in silence.

I don't like being beaten at anything. I like swift, clean victories, which is usually what I've experienced all my life. Clean shots on catapults, clean dives onto fish. I've never met a dragon that I haven't won against before. But to a human like Hiccupâ€|

"Aw, c'mon, Toothless," Hiccup says, patting my head, which for some reason makes me feel even worse.

"Toothless?" Hiccup asks, worry settling in. "Are you alright?"

...Sort of, I mumble. _Dammit, for a deep voice like mine, you'd think that I was strong and powerful and everything._

"Well, for a boy with such powerful words, you'd think I wasn't prone

to guilt," he says, giving me a guilty look.

Mmâ€| I mutter, watching the distance as I try to lose myself of the feeling of bitterness. I shouldn't even be feeling this kind of stuffâ€|

"It's alright, Toothless," Hiccup says. "I lose all the time."

To me, I point out. _I like picking on you. And now I'm on the short end of the stickâ€| I deserved it._

"You need some fish," he says, handing me one. I bite it reluctantly but croon in response. The fish is just so powerful in tasteâ€| I feel much better with it. "That's it."

You always know how to make me feel better, I mumble.

"So do you," he says.

Duh, I say, and Hiccup laughs.

I let the silence seep in a bit as I scan for any available land for us to land. My wings can go on for far more, but how much can Hiccup take, sitting on my back for copious amounts of time without stretching around?

"Oh, I'm fine," Hiccup answers. "I deserve it."

I warble but promptly hit him with one of my ears.

Maldrit.

****S****

Nord is a powerful village. It was built from the finest of warriors and the wealthiest of craftsmen. For centuries we have been touched by the magic of the dragons, and with dragons did we find peace and prosperity-

I snap out of my blank dream not long after the word 'touched'. This dream has been coming back to me for a while, ever since I met Toothless and Hiccup. How did I come to meet these people? What did I do to deserve their hospitality and care?

The simple answer was always chance. _Okt_, as dragons and I call it. If something good happened, it was because of chance. If it was something bad, it was because of chance.

But I think to more than that. What if was because of /fate?

What if I was to be the one to find a dragon in our presence again, and with dragons reunite us together again? What if /Niison and /Noxon are the ones who will bring our bonds together once again?

I have to know. If it is fate, then I will be slightly disappointed that our meeting was not by chance, and thus our closeness would not have been because of my own actions, but if not, then I do not know why I am here with a person so close.

"Hiccup?" I ask, watching him search tentatively for a nearby island to land on.

"Yes?" he answers, locking the flight mechanism in place and turning back towards me. Toothless snorts in reply of the recent developments.

"Isn't that uncomfortable for him?" I ask worriedly, pointing at the open (and continually open) artificial tailfin. "I mean, gliding and being unable to change positions?"

"He's fine with it," Hiccup says, which earns him a slap by Toothless's ear. I laugh, even though I shouldn't have. I laugh anyway.

"Well, for a short amount of time," Hiccup says, rubbing his side. "What's up?"

"Why didn't I get hurt from that arrow?" I ask, looking at the arrow in the quiver, still warm from the flames that Toothless burned. "I don't get it."

"Toothless has a special fire called the Inner Flame," Hiccup tells me. "He can use it to enter and hide thoughts and control fire."

"So he controlled the arrow not to harm me?" I ask confusedly.

"He controlled the flames that were covering the arrow," he explains. "So when it touched you, the flames took the impact instead."

"So how come it harmed the others and not me?" I ask, scratching my head in confusion.

"Oh that," Hiccup says with a grin. "Those flames were controlled by Toothless, but the inner flame was from someone else who was really close to you, but not the governor's men."

"Really close?" I ask. "I was locked up by the goons the whole time. What do you mean?"

In front of me, Toothless snorts in amusement.

"Don't you get it?" Hiccup says, pointing to his tunic. No, under that. His heart.

I look at him in shock.

"Those were your flames?" I ask in disbelief.

"Toothless doesn't share a strong caring bond with you," he explains. "I mean, he does care, but he doesn't see you as a brother- and the inner flame is harmless to those who are seen with immense care, or in other words, cared by the flame itself."

"And you got that flame from...?" I ask slowly, the truth dawning in on me.

"Yep," Hiccup says proudly. "Toothless."

A really irritated snort from Toothless gets Hiccup to turn back

around and unlock the tailfin, ending the gliding session.

"Whoops," he says, laughing. "Sorry. Where were you again?"

"The flames," I ask eagerly. "They were yours, and Toothless manipulated it?"

"He did," Hiccup says proudly, patting Toothless in the side in affection.

"Gee, I wish _I_ had an-" I begin. I'm about to say 'inner flame', but then Hiccup would suggest me becoming immortal something, and that can't happen, because I'll have to return to my village, and the inner flame would make me end up missing him even more when he's gone.

"-Unbreakable friendship like you two," I finish, faking a smile and hugging Hiccup gently.

After all, it's him that matters. Not me. I'm just along for the ride.

****T****

I listen in on Sena's thoughts and I can't help but sigh.

Sena is just so sensitive at times. I wonder why he thinks himself like that. I don't think I could give him an inner flame, because that would mean he'd have to become immortal, and he obviously hasn't been through what I've been through with Hiccup, so I my flames /will hurt him- but that doesn't mean that I don't care about him. He's a powerful boy, and he has taught Hiccup how to defend himself using those humans bows, but yet he thinks of himself so lowly.

Nevertheless, if I'm going to do or think of _anything_ of significance, I'm going to have to find land first.

I let out a roar into the sea, watching as the sonic waves fly off into the distance. I feel a few bounce back towards me from the northeast. There, I sense a solid piece of land not far away from here, /finally, after and immediately begin dashing towards it.

"Whoa!" Hiccup says, gripping the saddle tightly. "Found land already?"

Yep, I nod, flapping my wings in determination as the island finally comes in sight.

We land after not long, the green island mostly made with tress but little living beings Hiccup and Sena taking a while to stretch around as I sit down, resting from my tired travels. How long was it? 4 hours non-stop? That must explain a lot to why they're so very struggling to walking around at the moment.

Tired? I joke, getting up after a short relief and lifting up a paw to blow fire on it. Fire cleans my skin much better than water does.

"Very," Hiccup says, giving his good leg a swing. "Aren't you?"

"Yes," Sena and I answer at the same time. Sena looks confused at Hiccup's laugh.

"Time for some food, then," Hiccup says, handing everyone a piece of bread (which makes you think that it would be a lot of people, when in reality there are like, only three), including me.

Hm? I ask, looking at the bread in interest. _Isn't this for you?_ I ask Hiccup.

"Actually, I wanted you to try it out," he says, smiling.

Eh? I ask, looking at the bread distrustingly. Sena looks at Hiccup confusedly.

"C'mon, it won't hurt," Hiccup says.

I give it a piercing look, but nothing really seems to be wrong about it. Stillâ€¦

I'm not eating it, I declare. _No way._

"Oh yes, you are," he says, picking up the bread and holding it up in front of my snout. I shake my head vigorously.

It doesn't even have **_blood!_** I say, glaring at it. _How do you eat anything without that?_

"You're about to find out," Hiccup says confidently. "Just eat it."

Uh-uh, I say stubbornly.

"Wellâ€¦ then I'm not going to let you have any of the spice from now on," he says mischievously.

I widen my eyes. A lot.

What?! No way! I say, whimpering. _That's like the best thing I've ever had before!_

"Well, you're not going to get it unless you eat the bread," Hiccup says. "C'mon, it's just /one bread."

I could go grab the spices right nowâ€¦ I begin, glaring at him, but think twice. Where would I keep it? Besides, it's Hiccup who finds these spices. Not me. I have no choice but to comply. _Fine._

Hiccup watches me with an amused look on his face as I near my snout towards the bread slowly. Sena tugs Hiccup by the tunic in wonder.

I look at the bread like it's my worst enemy.

You're disgusting and evil, I tell it. I swear that it sneers back at me.

I sniff the bread.

You're dull and odorless.

I open my mouth.

I'm only doing this for Hiccup. Don't think more than what you need to, stupid bread.

My teeth grasp the bread's smooth texture, and the second the wheat touches my tongueâ€|

Hey, you're not bad.

I let my tongue lick it around a bit.

Hey, you're sweetâ€| what is happening to me? You're supposed to be evilâ€|

I let the bread lay in my mouth for a while, letting my tongue wrap it around and around in its intoxicatingly sweet taste.

_Hey, I like thisâ€| toxic, _I admit. Like, I seriously do. I don't know why, but it's good, and I want more.

"See?" Hiccup asks, laughing. "Must be because your tongue hasn't had anything like this before."

"I've heard that it's because there's something in your tongue that causes bread to taste sweet," Sena pipes up. "Since you've never had bread before, it must feel really sweet."

"_It's sweeter than blood",_ I tell Sena in Dragonese. He gives me a repulsed look, but then laughs.

"So, like it?" Hiccup asks, handing me another piece of bread. I look at it eagerly, my mouth watering slightly from its fragrant taste.

Yes, please, I say, _Damn, I sound weird when I say that._

"You can use those words to describe Stormfly as well," Hiccup deadpans. I laugh.

****T****

It's not long before night falls and darkness comes over to the land. The moon glistens in its own unique and fascinating way. I wonder if anything's up there. I've tried flying up towards it, but I didn't get really far. So maybe it's just a kind of thing that you can see, but you cannot reach.

Like Stormfly, unfortunately.

"Well, I guess we'll settle here for the night," Hiccup declares, giving us all an obvious look.

I nod in agreement, and Sena smiles. The two ****_chai_****begin to set up a camp, and they play around happily, which makes me happy as well, and finally we're all seated around a small patch of ground

that I do not ignite. I find the moonlight to be enough light, and Hiccup and Sena were sweating from the work.

Thankfully, dragons never sweat. Unless you're a dragon like Hiccup.

****H****

"I'll tell you a story about my village," Sena begins, settling down on the cold logs. "Maybe you can relate to something about the dragons and the Isle of Night that way."

"Awesome," I say, sitting down. I wish I had a fan or something. I'm sweating.

Awesome, Toothless repeats, sitting down and waiting patiently for Sena's story.

For some reason, I sense that Sena is a bit more fidgety than before. I don't say anything, though. He must be itching to tell the story, I guess.

"Nord was built six generations ago," Sena begins. "It's high up north, so the water often freezes and we're often stuck against our tribal enemies to the east."

"Enemies?" I ask, giving Toothless a skeptical look. "Berk's never had enemies."

You live on an isle. _Shh,_ Toothless hushes. How does a dragon _hush_ someone? _Rule number one of listening to a story: Never. Interrupt._

"Anyway," Sena continues, "Nord is a village not far from the coast, and like the other tribes to the north, we were _always_ fighting each other. Villages rose, villages fell, but Nord's its isolation from the midlands has always kept us safe. Since the water freezes most of the time, enemies can't attack us from the sea, and to the east we have been holding out for a long while. There aren't a lot of villages at war with each other now, because it would hurt their trading status at the Halla port, but to the more higher north, there are rogue vikings that still fight.

"It was this fighting, anyway, that drove the dragons out from the Midlands."

"Huh?" I ask, but Toothless silences me with another _hush_, and I fall silent.

"The dragons were once our allies, the elders told me. Or, at least, from what I've managed to sneak in to listen. I've never really been invited to the city's celebrations," Sena admits.

I make a mental note to make sure Sena will no longer be seen as a thief/outcast when he gets back.

"They said that the dragons once helped us get through our troubles, for we did not hunt them down like the other villages did. The dragons once ruled the lands surrounding us, so even then we were pretty isolated even back then. So in exchange for safety and melting

the ice in the harsh winters so we could trade all year long, we negotiated with the other villages to leave the dragons alone. They were quite the peaceful type, the ones living in the Midlands. The elders say it was because they weather was harsh for them and they had to stay together to stay alive, which was the most rational thing to do. Unlike us humans.

"Nord was so close with the dragons that we eventually got their culture incorporated into ours. There were scholars writing books about Dragonese, and healers devoted to healing dragons. Dragonese became a second language to Nord, and it's also hinted that the Nords could speak to the dragons fluently. The dragons may have taken some of our culture in, too, but none of us really know."

"Despite our alliance, not all the other villages agreed, of course. A lot of them saw this as an opportunity to slay dragons and take advantage of their powers. We were the only village that sided with the dragons, so we were on pretty uneven ground. Yet, we held out and kept out with the negotiations. Eventually, after a successful attack on a dragon settlement on the borders, the fighting started. Nord sent its troops to the dragon borders on behalf of the dragons, but despite our bonds, the dragons left, and it was then that we were very exposed to the world outside. We suffered a lot of losses, but Nord's biggest loss was the dragons who no longer provided us new knowledge and barriers against the Midlands.

Sena pauses for a breath as Toothless looks at him with utmost interest.

Over time, the Dragonese culture faded, and finally, this is where today comes, when I can only speak a few words, he says.

A little part of me wants to point out that _Toothless_ can speak with him rather well, but I resist the urge.

"Wow," I say. "That's quite a history."

"Yeah," he says. "Doesn't Berk have its history as well?"

"I've never asked," I say, smiling. "I guess I'll never know."

It's nice how history has such manifestation based on who's telling it- from the humans, though, I guess we are fairly biased on everything we do anyway, so of course we'd be in huge trouble if the dragons heard what /we've been talking about them before. I wonder how dragons tell their stories. Arrogant, like Toothless, or peaceful, like the Midlands?

Funnily enough, I find your thoughts biased as well, Toothless snorts. _Like, me, arrogant?_

"_I'm_ the only one who can hear you," I shoot. "And I'm being fair to you."

"That's all," Sena suddenly says, getting up. " But before we all go to bed, I'll go see if there's anything weird on this island," Sena says, smiling and slinging up his bow and quiver. "Don't want another Terror on me." Right after that, I see him running off towards the trees before I can object.

What? Is he running off and not even asking me to go along?

"Wait!" I begin.

He'll be safe, Toothless says. _The island has no people nor dragons. Except for, you know, us._

"Hopefully," I nod. Isolation has its own dangers, of course.

****T****

I see Sena wink my way just before he runs into the forestation. And I can tell from his glint that he _is_ winking for _me_, and does not want Hiccup to see. What does that mean?

Is he giving me some time with Hiccup, so I can ask _Mikata_ the more personal things I would not have asked is Sena was around?

I guess so. What, is there supposed to be reason to why I believe in Sena's unspoken motives? I trust him. And I trust Hiccup. What I don't trust is myself.

Hey, Hiccup, I say, rounding on him with determination. _Are my legs a bit too long?_

"W-what?" Hiccup asks, holding back a laugh. "Your legs?"

Um, yeah, I answer, looking down at them nervously. _I mean, I just noticed how weirdly they stick out when I'm standing and how awkward it seem to keep them tucked up while flying. Are they too long?_

"How am I going to know?" Hiccup asks, finally letting out a series of laughs as he rubs the log he's leaning on. "I'm not a dragon."

But you can see for me, right? I ask inquiringly. _Like, are my legs awkward when I walk?_

"Um," Hiccup says, pressing his lips together tightly. "Not really? They're good for you. Why?"

Just curious, I say, warbling gently. _Do you think Stormfly likes me?_

"Huh?" Hiccup says, pausing to give me a you're-not-serious-are-you look. "Excuse me?"

Do you think she likes dragons with macho legs? I ask, flexing my legs nervously. _I mean, she must like some part of mineâ€¦_

"Macho?" he asks, grinning. "What are you talking about?"

My eyes widen in fear as he says these words. I feel a shiver running down my body.

You don'tâ€¦ see it? I ask, holding out a paw anxiously. _The muscle in here? The power it packs?_

"I don't get it," Hiccup says, grinning. "Is it supposed to look cool?"

I stare at him in shock as if a thunderbolt had just landed on me, immobilizing my body with its electrical currents.

Whatâ€¦? But if you don'tâ€¦ Stormflyâ€¦ I say in despair, staring at my legs anxiously for an inch of toughness in it. _Reallyâ€¦?_

I slump myself to the ground in defeat, breathing hard out of my snout. Well, until I hear Hiccup laughing madly in front of me.

What's so funny? I snap, losing my hopelessness for a potential mate for a moment as I slit my eyes.

"What's funny is that you have _terrible_ self-esteem," he says, grinning madly. "Don't you have an ounce of confidence in you at all?"

Huh? I say, getting up and growling. _Are you saying that you've been playing with me?_

"You were just so clueless-" Hiccup says, but I take him down before he can finish the word.

Tell me! I say, growling. _Do I look nice or not?_

Of course, this would be a bad position for him to say 'no', but-

"No."

I cut him off with a huge blast of fire to the face. Can I make him mortal for just a second so I can hurt him?

You littleâ€¦ I begin, finding the most possible offensive insult to throw at him. _Devil._

"That would not be far from the truth," Hiccup points out. "Are you seriously thinking that you're _not_ handsome?"

What? I ask, my aggression fading with his confusing words. _You just said that-_

"I said that so you wouldn't slump there," he says, giving me what I see as a seductive look. "Besides, you know that I'm joking. You _are_ pretty handsome."

I'm not sure whether to feel relieved or freaked out at his words.

You find me handsome? I ask, getting off of him in fear. _Does that mean you-_

"No," he says, rolling his eyes. "I don't _like_ you. But I _think_ you're handsome."

_I would find it far more comforting if you said that I looked

totally terrible,_ I say, backing off slowly. _You sure you're not into me?_

"No, but if you were any more handsome than this, I would," he jokes.

Not good enough, I say, pinning myself against a tree and wishing it'd help me.

"Seriously? You were down just a moment ago because I said that you didn't look cool," he says, walking towards me. My back legs frantically find a place to back off to, but I find only the tree blocking my way.

No, don't, I say, watching in fear as he advances. _Don't even think of-_

"What?" Hiccup says, smiling, right in front of me now. "Prince charming?"

Don't kiss me! I burst out, but it's too late. Hiccup is already walking up towards me, and leaning downâ€¦

A hand on lands gently on the snout of mine. Right afterwards, I hear him laugh.

"You are the craziest dragon I've ever met," I hear him say, causing my eyes to open again.

Huh? I ask, watching him confusedly as he hugs my around the neck. Then the events earlier seep right back in, this time with reason and understanding. _Oh..._

"First you're totally mad at me for saying that you look bad, but when I don't, you think that I'm going to _kiss_ you?" he asks, laughing heartily. "You're crazy."

A large pang of embarrassment seeps in and my sides of my snout turns the slightest tone of red. Luckily, Hiccup doesn't see this.

Only girls can think that I'm handsome, I protest. _I'm not into boys._

"Me neither," he points out. "I'm just saying."

Is there a code to you humans to know when you mean something and you don't? I grumble, watching as he pulls back.

"If it's among boys, it's pretty much jokes and casual talk," Hiccup explains, sitting down on the log. "So I had a go at you, and it turned out even weirder than I expected."

Grmmgrmmm, I mumble. _You humans._

"In any case," Hiccup says, lazily flicking a piece of bark away from him, "You _do_ look nice. And your legs aren't terrible. And maybe Stormfly likes you already, you know."

Really? I ask, my ears perking up immediately. _Can that be possible?_

"Astrid and I were possible," he points out. "Why not you and her?"

I guess so, I say, finding a fish from the bag and chomping it up whole.

"Besides, _you_ and I have been proved to be possible," he says, leaning down and watching the stars above. "Wasn't it a starry night and a foresty location and a circular camp like this that I discovered your ability to talk to me?"

It was, I say, sitting down next to him. I light up the fire in the center and let the fire burn from there. I look through it, and feel a rush of nostalgia with the remembrance of the events that led to all this.

I also hear a voice nudging into my mind. With closer focus, it's Sena's, who just happens to be hiding behind a far-off bush aligned perfectly with the fire.

"_Um, I hope this works,_ " Sena's voice, faint and disjointed at parts, comes through. "_I just thought I'd make myself scarce to you two, because I could tell that I've been a nuisance to you both, and I need some time alone as well. So you don't have to worry about me, ok?_"

I focus intently at the fire as Hiccup drabbles about something not aimed towards me.

Alright, but that doesn't mean that you're going to have to stay like that all night, I begin, but as soon as Sena runs off right after I get to mid sentence, I learn out that Sena can't hear me. I quickly summarize it due to the care that, while I do have, is simply less than the point that I can communicate with him. Inner flame's most important key is hyper amounts of care, see. And I don't want to be that much caring of Sena—_he_ will have to leave, unlike Hiccup, who will be staying with me forever (hopefully), so I don't want to feel that attached to the younger boy. I care enough to miss him when he'll leave, but not superly overprotective caring like I do for Hiccup.

"Such memories," Hiccup sighs, snapping me out of my thoughts. I've always thought that it was just a figure of speech, but the way you _snap_ as your thoughts fade from interest for the more important world around you is really, really real. Maybe light thinkers have never experienced it before, but a Night Fury with literally _two_ minds like me certainly has.

I guess so, I say, giving him a happy croon.

"You were the one who convinced me to become immortal, right?" he asks, smiling. "I have a terrible memory."

That's saying something, because the inner flame is supposed to enhance memory and thoughts, I say, laughing.

"Yeah," Hiccup says, laughing as well. "I _am_ kind of stupid."

Don't say that, I say, growling.

"What? Can I not tell the truth?" he asks, giving me a grim smile. "_You're_ the one with all the plans, Toothless, not me. I try to keep up, but sometimes you're just way too smart_._"

I look at him with mild anger. Though I admit that I am arrogant in a way that I am smart, but with Hiccup, my arrogance is only used for jokes and displays of playfulness, and the truth behind it is that I know Hiccup is smart, possibly even more than me in ways, as hinted by his choice of words are sarcastic thoughts. I can't take it when he says that he isn't, because he is, and though he's being _himself_ here, his himself should not involve self-patronizing and mentally hurting himself. He means a lot to me, and to me, he is nothing but great.

Idiot, I mutter bitterly. _And I thought that _I_ had lesser feelings than humans._

"What did you say?" he asks questioningly.

Nothing. You're supposed to think better of yourself than this, I growl. _You even told_ me_ to be confident of my thoughts, and here you are, putting yourself down-_

"Hey, I'm _confident_ that I'm less smarter than you," he says. "Even you know that."

I do? I ask. _So you're gonna say that in front of Astrid or something?_

"She means something to me," he says, "Just like you mean something to me. So when I care, I tend to show out what I truly think behind that veil of sarcasm. And this is what I think of myself."

Thoughts can be misleading, I point out.

"Yeah, but these thoughts are what I find true."

Says the boy who also once thought I _was a pet,_ I shoot at him with mild distaste. _Was that true as well?_

A long silence fall at my words. I let it sink in, wanting him to know the full brunt of his actions.

"You didn't say pet," Hiccup begins painfully.

Well, you **_did_** _use to think of me as a pet,_ I point out.

Hiccup falls silent again, all the while giving me a very, very, guilty look. I can sense that this newly brought up information has been something that he's been trying to keep out of his mind for a while, but with the fact quite fresh in my head (like everything else), he's going to have to let this one out.

I also decide to take a look into his thoughts at the moment.

"_Não_| how did he know? Not that I see him like that now, but|

I've got to tell him the truth. I can't hide this kind of thing from him._"

He swallows hard and begins talking.

"Iâ€¦ I did," Hiccup says, standing up slowly. I can see his feet trembling from the rush of fear that he has. "Toothless, you're not mad at me, right?"

I give him a blank look, and it's more than enough to let him continue.

"I once did," he says, looking at me with a hurt look. "It lasted for the better part of the time we've spent together. Back when I first met you, I saw you as anâ€¦ animal."

My ears perk up in interest, but I speak of nothing.

"I thought that I could _train_ you," he continues. "I thought that I could _own_ you. Then, I wouldn't have to be the one in the village with nothing. I had no friends, I had no ambition, I had no strengthâ€¦ with you, I thought I could achieve greatness with you under my control."

He kicks the ground in frustration, the first of his tears flowing slowly.

"Over time, I spent more and more time in the cove with you, and I began pouring out my thoughts to you, and I thought for that moment that you didn't care or wouldn't understand me, because I thought of you as a _pet_. Pets don't understand what their m-masters are say, and they follow them everywhere, and listen to only the call of the o-owner.

"I even thought to myself that day: In Berk, we have pets. We haveâ€¦ dragons.

He wipes away his tears, though his legs are still trembling.

"It just turns out, that you could /both understand me and talk to me back, and I revised everything that day. I had thought of you as a friend from the start, because you always stuck to me wherever I went, even when you clearly could have been somewhere elseâ€¦ I thought it was just dragon instincts to protect humans.

"I found out: dragons have feelings and thoughts too.

He takes a step closer to me, his legs having to be forcibly moved in order to function properly.

"And when you talked to me backâ€¦ I realized you were no pet. I realized that you were a living, _talking_, _soulful_ being like me, and from pet friend I saw you asâ€¦ best friend."

"Toothless," he says, taking another step towards me. "Are you mad at me?"

I look at him blankly once again, giving him more time to pour out his thoughts.

"You must be," he says, taking another step towards. "To think that I was once to think that I controlled youâ€¦ you must be angry. Because in the end, I never have, and never will, because as close as we are, our souls are ours, and not to be taken into control from even the closest of us.

"I feel terrible for thinking that you were once a pet, when you are anything but that. It's been in my guts for a while, but I never wanted to tell you, because I didn't want to hurt you, butâ€¦ I hurt myself every day with that thought. I forgot about it for a while, but I didn't know that it was weighing down on your mind as well. And I guessâ€¦ you must have never forgotten."

"You must think that I'm betraying you. I don't blame you for that. I kept this away from you, I never admitted it to you, and nowâ€¦ and now, I pay the price."

Even I shed a small tear at his words. They're just so self-patronizing, and I don't want to hurt him, but for him to let out these thoughts, I must.

"Don't," Hiccup says softly, leaning down and grabbing onto my neck for support as he falls. "Don't cry."

He puts his face right next to my snout, his tears flowing freely once again.

"Don't run away again."

He hugs me with all his might, his legs struggling to keep himself up.

"Don'tâ€¦ leave me."

I let out a small croon, watching as he hugs me for the second time this day, his emotions running down his face, his thoughts clearing up with every sob he lets out, his inner flame growing and diminishing with time, like all things do.

It's alright, Hiccup, I say. _I'm not angry._

"You'reâ€¦ not?" he says, wiping his eyes again but not letting go of me. "Butâ€¦ I never told you it. I thought you'd be mad for keeping this kind of thing away from you."

I've known it for a long time, I say. _At first, I was frustrated that you saw me less than what I was, because I was an arrogant, bullying dragon who wanted to be powerful, but I thought of you, and the way you treated me, compared to the other dragons, who were definitely pets to their owners, and I once thought, 'at least he's a goodâ€¦ owner'._

"...What?" he asks, ceasing his cries in shock. "You once thoughtâ€¦ that?"

I once submitted to your will, I continue. _It didn't last long, of course, but for that moment, I truly believed that I was yours to control, because all you really did was do that. You fed me from those fish baskets. You took me flying under your will. You wanted to have a friend, and I wanted to protect you. So for a while, it didn't

matter whether I was yours or not. I just wanted to make sure you were safe._

But after that, I thought: I'm a dragon, not a pet. I'm a being, not a slave. It became pretty clear after that fight with my rival, when I was resisting taking orders from you, and that I wasn't what I thought I was. And so I was a bit more independent from then on. I was determined to show you that I wasn't just something that you rode on, but something that could rely on.

Anyway, that was all several months ago. As soon as you began to see me as a friend, I began to see you as a friend as well. Even if you saw me as a pet, I knew better. And I eventually didn't care.

"I'm sorry," he says. "I really am."

It's all in the past now, I sigh. _It's now that counts._ _You don't see me as a pet _now_, do you?_

"I think it was a sin that I ever did," he says. "But no, I don't."

Good, because if you do, I would skin you alive, I warble playfully. _To think that I made my_ **_owner_** _immortal so he could feed me fish all day._

"To be fair, _you_ were pretty opt on following me everywhere," he says, laughing. It's working; he feels better now, the feeling of nervousness in his stomach all gone. "You were pretty convincing."

Looks can be deceiving, too, I point out, grinning.

"Still," he says, pulling away from me (again). "You've put me through quite an emotional ride today."

So have you, I say, smirking. _You almost ruined my infallible ego._

"Yes, because you're the most handsome Night Fury I've yet to see," he teases.

I take that as a jab, though, because I'm the _only_ Night Fury he's always seen.

Just you wait, I say, crooning. _When you meet my mother, I'll show you how handsome she thinks of me._

"Which is not at all," he mutters, and I snort haughtily. Right on cue, Sena bursts in from the woods, holding a dead rabbit in his hand.

"Hey, guys!" he says, giving us a huge smile. "I shot something!"

"Really, Sena?" Hiccup says, rolling his eyes at him. "You had to _kill_ something?"

"Well, I thought that you might want it," he offers. "Eating meat from fish only makes your body unhealthy."

I shoot him a glare, but Sena pretends to not notice.

"No way," Hiccup says, backing off in disgust. "I don't eat recently dead animals."

"You eat recently caught fish," I say, but he ignores this.

"You have it, Toothless," he says. "I'm not."

"Yeah, but someone made me eat that bread," I say mischievously.

A stunned look dawns over his face.

"No way," he says. "No."

"Yes," I say, nodding to Sena and saying "Ki" to him.

Sena hands the fish over to me and I burn it thoroughly. Then Sena picks it back up (the fire roasted the insides fairly well), and begins to skin it with a knife.

"Wait, where'd you get that?" Hiccup asks, searching his pockets for his own dagger.

"You won't know until you eat this," Sena says, grinning.
"C'mon."

Hiccup gives me, Sena, and the rabbit a glare, but thinks better of his actions.

"Fine," he mumbles. "But you're so going to pay for this."

"In all due time," I croon as he reluctantly sinks a bite into the rabbit meat.

After a moment's chewing, he gives me a small smile.

"Hey, this ain't half bad."

Sena and I laugh.

* * *

><p>Well, I'm pretty sure this chapter did not meet any standards whatsoever, but I felt the need to get rid a lot of my frustrations, and how else to do so by writing?

1. Hiccup calls Toothless a pet in the movie/calls the dragons 'it' in RoB and even the latest DoB.

This might be proper if you're a fan of docile Toothless, but you should remember that Hiccup isn't the only one thinking. Which made me dislike DoB right off the bat.

2. I find DoB rather... flawed. But it's not that bad- except for 14 points that I found.

Anyway, glossary:

**Okt-**** Okat, Thai for 'chance'.**

Va- 2 meters. It's a Thai measurement.

12. Nadder

I am happy to announce that I finally have a plot to cling on, after spending so much lag in Halla. The chapters will get (a bit) shorter, but the plots will advance at a much more considerable pace.

Props to Absi B for spellchecking the whole story for me. She's awesome.

* * *

><p>H

As the blue night takes over, everyone calls it quits and takes to the ground for rest. After the events today, I don't blame them. We lost a place to stay, a source of information for Toothless and Sena, and a trust that we once held.

I close my eyes and forget myself to the world. Everyone in this world can be awake at this moment, but the three of us are in rest, forgotten by the world, unneeded by the world, but yet happy and smiling. I don't get it; if we don't matter to the world, then how do we matter? It's been something that's been on my mind a lot; I matter to Toothless, Toothless matters to me, but is that really enough to matter for? Why are we in the world, if we don't matter?

There are just some things that I find impossible to find the answer for. It's as if the world is daring me to think of what people have never have, and I'm the only one to feel the pain in not knowing them, for these things bother me like the rain bothers the skin.

I wonder if I've ever told Toothless about what I had once thought in the rain.

Yet, as I try to sleep, I feel like there is someone who is not by my side. I have always slept soundly in my bed, knowing that Toothless was in bed and asleep as well (or, at least, safe), but I feel like one of us is not asleep.

I open my eyes face to face to see Sena's eyes staring right back. Black, starnight eyes that hide so much pain and past in them, now shown openly through his peripherals, giving me that solemn look that Sena so rarely holds.

"Sena," I whisper. Sena blinks back at me. He can't be more than 2 feet away from me, his sidelying position mirroring only mine. It reminds me of how alike we are, and how different. We are nearly of the same height, but of emotional heights he has felt more than me. He has been through so much, and I have been babysat in a village that doesn't even care for me.

"Huh?" Sena says, jumping back with a start. I grin slightly.

"You can't sleep?" I whisper, being careful to not wake up Toothless. Odin knows what he's been through today, and it would be terrible if his torments were to resume again.

"N-not really," he whispers back, sitting up and giving me a sad look.

"What's wrong?" I ask, getting up and reaching out my hand to him.

"Iâ€¦" he turns away his face, but accepts the hand anyway. His hands, even though younger than mine, are so much tougher. They're fighter hands, not smith hands, and they have seen violence and even blood. I sometimes wonder what he has done to others before to get this kind of hands.

"Let's go," I whisper, heading towards the beachhead. "We can talk openly there."

Sena gives me a surprised look, but follows nonetheless, holding on to my hand tightly as if his life depended on it.

And, after all that he's been thinking, it might have well been. How many times have he come to me for support and care, and how many times have his smiles failed to come when I comforted him?

Like all things, the question has more than one answer.

"Hiccup, why?" Sena asks, walking with me to the beach in confusion.

"Because I know that you weren't in the woods just to scout out," I reply plainly. "C'mon."

We reach the beach, where the moon shines down on the world instead of the sun, and the water reflects the reflection of the moon, but never the sun. I must be because of the moon's nonexistent light that causes us to think of why the world lights up despite the moon being incapable of giving light to the world. I know that the moon has no light because something has to be hot enough to glow, and the moon certainly does not heat the world in any way, despite giving us this light of nonexistence.

"Hiccup," he begins as I stop at the beach and give him a smile. "Why do you care about me so much?"

"I know that you're frustrated at something," I say simply. "Spill the beans."

"But why must you ask?" he asks. "All my life, I've never been asked once how my well-being was, but here you are, giving all you've got to save my life even if I don't mean anything."

"Is that what you're frustrated about?" I ask, letting go of his hand and letting them return to his sides, where they hang limply. The wind causes his hair to ripple again, but his hair is so long that it covers his eyes as the wind blows it in his way. He does not make any movements to wipe it back.

"Yes," he says with bitterness. "Why do you care? When you met me, I

was as good as a nothing. And yet you saved me. Twice."

"Becauseâ€¦" I say, biting my lip. Why _did_ I care?

My mind goes back to Toothless and his slumber. Why do I care about him?

"Because you have proved to be someone that I find interest in caring for," I say. "Because you're not a bad person."

"But why?" he asks in frustration, his hands balling up in fists. "I was nothing to you before now."

"I was something to you, though, wasn't I?" I whisper softly.

The silence between us hangs over for a while.

"You can't say that you were nothing," I continue. "Because the moment I saw you in danger, I knew that I had to help you. Everything in this world is not nothing, but it's what I care to help that makes me me."

"So you care for me, because I'm something to you?" he asks, his tears running down past his eyes. "What if I wasn't?"

"That's-" I begin, but is met with a punch to the stomach. I recoil in surprise and pain, gripping my midriff tightly.

"Why?!" he asks, pulling his fist back and striking me on the shoulder instead. "Why is it that when I hurt someone, steal from someone, they don't care, but when I do this-" he lands another punch on my chest- "Do you not run away, why do you not see me as nothing?"

"Sena-" I say in physical pain, watching as he runs up to me and tackles me to the ground in anger. How long has he kept these angers in him?

"How come no one else has ever cared for me?!" he yells, pinning me to the ground and locking my hands in place. In the light of the moon, he is crying. His eyes, starlight black, are crying. "And what are you, to come and give me all this, knowing that I am worth nothing?!"

"Justâ€¦" I begin, finding not a word to explain to him under all the pain. "Let it all out. Please."

His fits stop in shock at my words.

"What?" he asks.

"If it's been me who's been hurting you all this time, then hurt me," I say. "If it wasn't me who hurt you, hurt me."

"But-" he begins, his raised fist lowering slowly.

"How many times have I tormented you with this, Sena?" I ask, the pains where he hit me aching even more than before. "The tunics, the swimming, the arrow? All of these things were just representations of what I cared for you. I never knew that what you truly wanted was for

others to care as well. So hurt me."

"Iâ€¦" he breathes, his face staring at my own defenseless own.
"Why?"

"Because I care," I whisper softly. "Because no matter how much you hurt me, it will never be more than what I have done."

His eyes flare with pure anger for a minute as he sinks his fist into the ground next to me.

"AAAAARGH!" he yells, letting out a scream. I'm surprised the Toothless has not awoken yet.

As he finishes his yell, he lets go of my hands and slumps down onto my chest, exhausted of emotions.

"It's alright," I tell him, patting his head that rests right above my heart. "It's alright."

"How come no one cares about me?" he sobs, his face not visible due to his head facing down. "Why do you have to torment me into thinking that others will?"

"They will," I say gently, the pains subsiding with his tears. "You just have to open up to them."

"What do I matter to them?" he asks quietly. "You care for people regardless. Not everyone is caring and kind like you."

"If you make yourself matter, then people will care," I tell him.
"How about your friends?"

He falls silent for a moment, and I do not pursue the subject in case it hurts his feelings. He rolls off me and stares at the giant sky above me.

"But I'm nothing," he says resignedly, holding out a hand to the sky as if to grab a star and keep it in his hands. "I used to be a thief, but I'm not one anymore. I'm nothing."

"But you're not nothing to Toothless," I point out. "You're not nothing to Astrid. You're not nothing to that girl at the port. And to me, you're a little brother with a playful personality and a happy smile. That's not nothing, either."

"So, to make myself nothing... I have to make myself matter?" he asks, turning his head to face me.

I nod.

He slowly gets up, his face bound with a tiny, sad, smile.

"I wish that I had a life where the only person who cared about me was you," he says. "But I have to go home, don't I?"

A long silence fills this, because I have no answer to his words, and eventually Sena gets up with a bigger smile than before. It's him who holds out his hands to me this time, allowing me to get up.

"I hurt you," he says.

"That's not something new-" I joke, but as soon as I see his smile falter, "Hey! I was just kidding!" I say, frantically rushing up to his distraught face and giving him a hug.

"It doesn't matter," he says, hugging me back. "Because you care, right?"

And this time, I find the words that I am looking for.

"Of course."

****H****

We walk back to the camp, where Toothless is still sleeping soundly. I doubt that his inner flame has been sound, though, especially since he's always been looking out for me even in his sleep. It's pretty nice of him to vouch over me 24/7, but sometimes he just needs to slack off and forget about my well-being for once.

"Go to sleep, you overprotective dragon," I tell his sleeping body. I get a small snore in response, causing me to smile in confirmation.

"Does he really fake sleep and look out for you in his sleep?" Sena asks curiously. His starlight eyes are quite powerful, I feel. I'm beginning to think that the girl at the port would have really fancied Sena if they met at night. I mean, now that he's feeling better, his eyes areâ€| sparkling. Like the night. _Noxon_ would be proud.

"I'm hoping he doesn't," I say, glaring at the dragon (who snorts in his sleep), "But he does. Why does he care about me so much?"

"Because, you know, you did _something_ that was worthy of him to care," Sena repeats my words in a playful voice.

"Oh, like annoying him all day?" I mutter, laying down to rest next to him.

"Like making him happy all day," Sena grins.

I glare at Sena as well.

"Well, I'm being honest," he says, laying down on the cold ground below. I think back to his life in poverty and what he's been through.

"Sena," I say, laying down as well. Sena turns and gives me a ready look.

"Is there something?" he asks.

"Yes," I say. "Is the ground rough?"

"Um, a little?" he says with uncertainty. "You don't need to go get the blanket for me. It'll get dirty."

"Nah," I say, pointing to myself. "Come sleep over here."

"Eh?" he asks, looking at me in inquiry. "Where?"

"Here, you stupid brother," I say, pulling him towards me gently by the arm. Once he's right next to me, both of our eyes facing the sky above, his own starlight eyes give me a grateful look.

"Are you sure you're not into boys?" he jokes. "This would look pretty awkward if we weren't like brothers."

"Shut up," I say, lifting his head gently and moving it to rest on top of my chest. "Here, at least your head won't feel the ground."

"What-" Sena begins. "Ohâ€¦ thanks."

I watch as he turns his body sideways, mumbling in comfort. His head is lying on my chest, providing me with a small difficulty to breathe, but his comfort being more than enough to surpass the urge to push him off. His body lying perpendicular to my own, and his face full of happiness. He just looks so _innocent,_ even if his life has been anything but that.

"You don't have to turn yourself into a pillow for me, you know," he says, looking up at the stars above. "I don't know if I can do the same for you."

"Oh, I can imagine that your home has pillows of some kind," I tell him. Really, this is the best I can do for him. He'll be home soon, and I'll never get to give him all these opportunities to be happy, and all these opportunities to make me happy. After all, he's the mortal one. So this is what I will do, and this is what I want to do.

"You're not making going home any easier," he snaps.

My face falls slightly-

"Hey! I was just kidding!" he says, turning over and giving me a smile.

"Hmph," I grin. He turns back and closes his eyes.

"Thanks," he says quietly. "For a lot of stuff."

"Go to sleep," I say, smiling. "You can thank me in your sleep."

His mumbles indicate that he's falling asleep fast.

_Close your _/ _starlit_ / _black eyes_

As the / _sun goes_ / _down_

Give me / _something_ / _that'll long me_

When you'll / _no longer_ / _be _

Around

Close those / _starlit_ / _black eyes_

As the / _moon again_ / _rises_

Remember / _the soft smiles_ / _you gave me_

And never / _lose them_ / _when I'll be_ / _no longer_ /
be

Around

Sena's soft snores indicate his sleep. I turn to Toothless, who snorts in his sleep again.

"What? You sleep on me all the time," I point out, smiling.

Toothless warbles and finally lets his inner flame rest.

And so do I.

****T****

I'm the first to get up today. Hooray! It's usually Sena who's up the earliest, because he's used to doing that (he has to). I guess that last night really had an effect on him. My inner flame can't detect that much conversation, but it knows what to respond. And maybe it was those snorts at late night that allowed me to wake up so early today. Man, was I tiredâ€¦|

I turn around and see Sena lying peacefully on Hiccup's stomach, his head turned towards Hiccup's head, both of them sleeping happily.

Awww. I wonder if I'd get to sleep like this if _I_ were a human. Not that I'd want to as much as wrapping him in my arms and keeping him safe and warm, of course, but the way Sena feels soâ€¦| at peace really gets my mind ticking. Maybe I should insist on sleeping _on_ him next time.

Anyway, time to get started with the day. If I'm not wrong, Sena's island should be in sight within today, which makes me both kind of sad and relieved. Sad because Hiccup just feels so _close_ to Sena, but relieved because Sena will finally meet his family with people who can really protect him once again. I mean, you could hate them all you want for neglecting Sena, but they allowed him to stay in the house, no? That's far more than what Sena could have asked for at that time.

Actually, _this_ has been far more than what Sena's been expecting. Who would think that a boy injured by a Terror would be rescued and treated so well? No one. Not even me, but it's happened.

To be honest, I believe Sena would have a nice spot in Berk. Better than what I've heard about Nord, anyway.

But we should get to the point about _getting_ to Nord first. Besides Sena, why I feel the need to go to that island is that it has ties with /dragons, and with dragons among me will I find the truth about the Isle of Night and my mother. She hasn't left me, hasn't she?

No. Not this thing again.

Let's see what we have hereâ€¦ oh, yeah! Seasoned fish!

I trudge slowly towards the sacks that hold the food slowly, making sure not to wake up any possible means of ruining my attempt to feast on this tasty breakfast, and poke my head into the bag eagerly.

Mm, the smell of fish! The smell of seasoning! The smell ofâ€¦
Hiccup?

"Get out of there," Hiccup says, pulling me back by the neck. "You're getting your food at sea."

Awww, I groan, looking at the fish just outside my reach with utmost disappointment. _But I was about to have the greatest meal of my life!_

"These are for later, you idiot," he says, pulling harder at me (who still refuses to withdraw my head from the exhilarating smell).
"We're going to need something to eat in case something goes wrong."

I read his mind for a second and then quickly grab a fish and chomp it right down. I'm sorry, fish! I couldn't savour your wonderful taste in my mouthâ€¦ I'll get more of you later, alright?

I pull my head out with a happy grin, meeting with Hiccup's half frowning own.

What? I say, smiling playfully and sliding my tail around in delight. _You were going to eat that for yourself anyway, right?_

"Yes," he snaps, mustering every bit of dignity he can to say those words without blushing.

Too late, I say. _I eat one already._

He gives me a glare, to which I snort at.

"Whatever," he says, picking up the rest of the bags. "You might as well keep up that attitude."

I know, right? I say, nudging his side playfully. _We're going on a rather long trip today._

"Even _you_ know that," he shoots at me. Behind him, Sena is already up and rearranging the logs so it wasn't this obvious that we were once here. When travelling, never leave your trails behind, because people will be able to follow you, and especially since we have Minox and an angry Stoick, we're definitely going to have to stay as secretive as possible.

"_Uh, hey, Sena,_ " I say, crooning to get his attention. He looks at me with surprise.

"_Araii?_" he asks, meaning _Yes?_ In a rather informal way. But we _are_ informal.

"**_Ich daiâ€| hoshii?_**" I ask. "Don't you want a bag?" is the translation. I would like to say more, but his vocabulary is sadly limited. I can imagine his village having records of Dragonese, though. His village reminds me a lot of the Queen's nest, actually.

He gives me a thoughtful look, trying to find the words that he needs.

"**_Ichâ€| ii_**," he mumbles. Hiccup looks at us confusedly, and I translate his words for him ("One would be nice"). I can feel Sena's mood faltering, though.

"**_Kathot,_**" I mumble. Why is it so hard for me to admit that I'm sorry?

Both Sena and Hiccup give me a startled look.

What? I snap. _I was just-_

"**_Noxon itt 'Kathot',_**" Sena says in awe. "You reallyâ€| did?"

Huh? I ask, crooning in confusion. _What?_

"He doesn't get what you said," Hiccup says.

"Oh, uhâ€| did you really apologize?" Sena asks.

I nod, giving him a little coo.

"Funny," he says. "I thought my Dragonese had that."

Your Dragonese is a very humanish variant of the language, I say. _The original Dragonese is quite complicated._

Hiccup translates that and Sena gives me another thoughtful look.

"But what you've been teaching me," he says. "Are those all real Dragonese words?"

Not really, I tell Hiccup/Sena. _Otherwise you wouldn't be able to understand me._

Sena nods.

"So, uh, you need a bag of your own, right?" Hiccup asks, correctly guessing the meaning of my words. "I didn't think of that. Sorry."

Sena nods again, not really knowing what to say. What _do_ you say when you know that you're preparing for your leave? There's not much you can say about yourself at that point.

"Here," Hiccup says, handing the bag with the tunics and weapons to him. "Take whatever else you want as well. You're going to need to be prepared in case something happens."

"Something?" Sena asks, giving Hiccup a quizzical look.

"Well, that's why Toothless wants you to pack now," Hiccup says. "In case Nord has some aerial defenses and we're forced to drop you off there-"

"No!" Sena says, looking at Hiccup angrily. "The people of Nord wouldn't do thatâ€¦ right?"

"**_Niison non seria_**", I say, not telling Hiccup that it means "Hiccup's not serious."

"Oh," Sena says, his smile returning. "I was just thinking that anyone who would want to hurt you are crazy."

"There are a lot," Hiccup says, but I growl at him.

_Keep on talking and someone nearby _will_ hurt you,_ I threaten. Because, you know, I can protect him, regardless of his enemies, and him saying that is like I can't.

"Oh," Sena nods. "Alrightâ€¦ I think I might need a blanket as well. My house has only one, and I don't get to use it."

T

The sun dazzles of its accord, the rays spreading out in cascades and giving warmth to the world like the water slowly washes up to shore, sending us waves of thoughts and time running through with no means of return. The rays that have shone will not come again, but it is what we use of it that makes it important to us.

As we're in the air, I focus my senses towards the landmass not far from us. I told Hiccup and Sena to hurry up in packing and all, because if we're going to get there by midday, not including the possible resistance that the humans who have never met with a dragon will put up, we're going to have to start our journey fast.

We're up in the air so fast, in fact, that Hiccup and Sena are having their breakfast on my back, bread and roasted (but not seasoned) fish, and not on the ground. I'm doing my best to fly with the most speed I can with several bags and two humans loaded on top of me.

"You sure are enthusiastic about this thing," Hiccup says, laughing. I roll my eyes and shoot forward through the air like the bolts of fire that I shoot: straight, true, and never missing. I'm enthusiastic when Hiccup is, and he's enthusiastic when I am (unless it's about Astrid or Stormfly respectively). But I also want to get there because it holds the dragon-human scrolls! Maybe I can even find more information about this inner flame thing, and I might even be able to heal Hiccup's leg or something! Or I can chop the other side off if he denies me fish...

"I heard that," Hiccup says. I laugh.

"Hey, Hiccup," Sena pipes up. "What's that?" He points to a speck in the sky that seems to be growing as we approach it.

"That's-" he leans over closer for a look. "That's a

dragon!"

What?! I ask, squinting my eyes towards the speck. It's a dragon. It looks like a female dragon. It looks likeâ€¦|

Stormfly! Hiccup and I yell at the same time. Hiccup barely has time to tell Sena to hold on tight as I put up a burst of speed towards her, my wings flapping with all their might.

After so long, I've found her. Where has she been hiding? I completely forgot about her, thinking about Mother and the freaking Governor. How did I? She's been on my mind so muchâ€¦|

I see no human, I observe, and Hiccup nods.

"Astrid sent Stormfly away before she left Berk on that trading mission," he explains. "But why is Stormfly going up North?"

Beats me, I say, stretching out my wings and letting the air below me lift myself up higher. I'll have a better chance of catching up to her with the height advantage.

Stormfly! I yell, coming out in the form of a powerful roar. The dragon falters her flight, but nonetheless continues to fly onwards.

Stormfly! I yell again, flying straight towards her in a steady dive. She panics and darts to the side as I slowly catch up with her.

Who are you? Get away from me! she caws at me, picking up in speed. I blast forward towards her, causing her to shriek in fright.

Stormâ€¦| huh? Upon nearing her, I realize that she does not have the unique Berkian scent that I had fallen for. She is another Nadder, not different in characteristics of Stormfly, but certainly nowhere near the attractiveness of the vain (and hot) dragon.

What are you going to do to me? she asks frightfully, trying to outmatch my speed, but even with the weight on my back, she is no match for me.

I'm only going to ask you a few questions, I say, trying to look not disappointed (though the aggression in my voice sort of ruins that). _Do you know a beautiful Nadder named-_

"_Where are you from?_" Sena cuts in Dragonese, and I'm too impressed by how he understood my Dragonese to argue.

_I'm from the North- what? Are those _humans_ on your back?_ she asks in surprise, finally slowing down for me. Maybe she guessed that with humans on my back, I won't be completely lust-driven. (Well, I _was_ lust driven. But not for a Nadder like this.)

Yes, they are, I say irritably. _You were saying?_

I'm from the North, she repeats. then she launches into a full flurry of curious questions. _That's we Northern Dragons live, anyway. Are you from the Midlands? And are those seriously __humans?

How come they aren't hunting you? Are you saving them for dinner?_

No, no, they're my friends, and no, I answer, growling. _Is every dragon I'm going to meet from now on going to ask me about how I have humans on my back?_

Not at all. It's not a strange sight at all, she says sarcastically, showing no shame at all. What can I say? She's a vain Nadder. Just like there are smart Nadders and stupid Nadders and smart Night Furies and all, there are shameless Nadders as well. _But_ I _am. Anyway, you must be from the Lowlands. But I thought the majority of dragons there were controlled by the Queen in Red?_

It's a long story, I say, Sena translating that to Hiccup and the two grinning. _Can I ask something already?_

Go ahead, she says huffly, flapping her oversized wings in an ungraceful way. _It's only because you're hot that I'm listening, anyway._

I roll my eyes. If only Stormfly gave me this kind of complimentâ€¦

Where are your other friends? I ask, the village of Nord finally on clear radar, just past a couple of valleys and over the seas. _Surely if you're from the Northlands it would take quite a while for you to get back there._

They're not far from here. We're spreading out because it increases our chance of finding a mate, and the North doesn't have enough-

What?! I ask, snorting unintentionally. _You're looking for a **mate**?_

The Nadder population of the Northlands have been running low, she says grudgingly. _After what happened to the Midlands, though, I'm not surprised._

My mind flashes back to what Sena said: "_A lot of them saw this as an opportunity to slay dragons and take advantage of their powers._" Does this mean that there used to be lots of (pretty) Nadders in the Midlands?

"There were," Hiccup says, smirking. I hit him with my ear to shut him up.

Were you there? I ask the Nadder. She eyes me with annoyance.

My mother was, she says. _She said everyone there made for the Northlands as the humans attacked us. There was a village who wanted to help us, but none of us trusted humans anymore, so now the Midlands is home to a bunch of Terrors and Typhoomerangs._

Why do you use the humanese word for those **Ursai**? I ask. _I find the name in their language even more annoying._

Above me, Sena whispers "Sorry. I can't translate that for you. It's

too hard."

So, is that why you're going south? I snort. _To find your lover?_

What else am I supposed to do? she snaps. _I'm doing what I can to survive. Besides, if you want to know more about this whole Midlands thing, why don't you just ask your humans?_

They're not mine, I growl. _They might be my 'friends', but they're not mine._

Whatever, she says. Then she lowers her neck and gives me a soft coo. _It's been nice talking to an attractive dragon like you._

I find myself blushing madly at her words as she turns tail and flies for the Southlands.

Uhâ€¦ you too,_ I stutter, much to Hiccup's amusement.

What's your problem? I snap at the scrawny, growling.

"Nothing," he says, smirking.

I watch the oncoming landmass of Nord finally come into distance dreamily.

So maybe she'd make a good mate as wellâ€¦ I ponder. _She_ is_ pretty..._

"No," Hiccup says right away. "She's definitely not-"

I give him a mental glare, jolting him instantly and forcing him to change words mid-sentence.

"-as attractive as Stormfly," he finishes hastily.

Mm, I coo. _Can you believe it? I finally broke the agreement that there was no 'my friend' thing._

"It's the thought that counts, I guess," he says, licking his lips in thought. "If you're comfortable with it, I guess it's alright."

Really? I ask, giving him a nervous look. _But you're not 'mine'..._

"Nor are you mine either," he says. "But if by 'my friend' we mean the owning of the bonds that we have together, then it's OK. I mean, is this bond anyone elses'?"

I guess not, I agree. _So, by 'my friend' we mean 'my friendship owner'?_

"Yes," he says. "We mean that."

"Um, guys," Sena jabs in. "Is that Nord's port that I see?"

The landmass known as the West Midlands are finally large enough for us to appreciate.

"Yes," Hiccup confirms, pointing towards the frozen water and the houses on land not far from it.

"Are you sure that they're going to let Toothless in?" Hiccup asks.

"I think so," Sena says. "We _have_ had a good past with dragons. It's the dragons who've had problems with _us._"

_Don't you mean it, _ I mumble, shooting towards the landmass where the Midland Dragons no longer inhabited.

* * *

><p>LN: L/N basically means "LesserWraith note" because AN would clash with Absi's, who is hinting of yet another collaboration story...**

The story of Hiccup and Toothless will now finally live up to the 'adventure' tag from now on- prepare for dragons, villages, and yes, OCs. The human Dragonese and the dragon Dragonese are important things to remember from now on, because the next chapters will have a lot of _that._

Human Dragonese: based on TH/JP/CH

****_Ich dai| hoshii-_ Ichi (JP- one), Dai (CH- bag), Hoshii (JP- want). The vowel is already doubled, so I couldn't double it again.****

*****_Ich| ii - _ii (JP- good)*****

*****_Noxon itt 'Kathot'- _Itt (Itte - JP - to say/said), roughly translated as "Toothless said sorry."*****

****Dragon Dragonese: based on LT/JP/TH****

*****_Niison non seria-_non (Latin- not), Seria (Latin- serious). Pardon me if my translations suck.
>****

13. Nord

Well, here comes the plot development. And you guys still have to hang onto Sena for a bit longer.

* * *

><p>"Touchdown!" Sena cries, jumping off Toothless's back and landing on the snowy ground below. "Destination, home!"<p>

_Well, _ Toothless croons as Sena hops around wildly, looking at the land in front of us with interest. _That looks like a pretty big place._

"Yeah," I agree, getting off him and feeling the thin layer of snow beneath me. It looks like winter's been here for a while already, but the snow hasn't fallen here in a while.

"Home! Home!" Sena continues to jump around in glee.

"Don't wear yourself out before we get to your parents," I joke. He lessens his jumps by only a little bit.

Hey, Hiccup, Toothless calls. _Look at those houses._

"Houses? Why would a dragon like you be interested in..." I begin.

Look at how they're set perfectly apart together.

The village houses seem to be built entirely out of wood, each house containing a chimney with smoke coming out of them in little puffs of gray air. Each structure is built sturdily on the ground, but there are some with raised, metal rods that are built right over the ice. These houses are actually /above the water, but smartly built to be level with the other houses on land. The amazing thing is that none of these houses are aligned at all. From the view here, the houses are randomly scattered around, even deeper inwards as we advance slowly, but the spaces between them are all

Equal, Toothless croons. _The spaces in between them are all equal._

Imagine a round table with dishes scattered throughout it. And imagine these dishes all having the same distance between each other. Now imagine people building these dishes without having an overhead view of the city front.

It's a perfection that every architect wants.

"...Holy-"

Too bad you're a smith, Toothless jokes, sweeping his tail around to detect any fractures in the ice.

"I'm not the one to build houses," I say, taking his cut in for Sena's presence. "I want to build _tools._"

"But _I_ want to be a weapon-creator!" Sena pipes up, jumping on me unexpectedly and nearly pushing me off-balance. "Um, what do you call that?"

"Um" I say, licking my lips in thought. "Uh..."

Weaponsmith, Toothless says, nodding towards something in front of me. /Like that house.

A large house stands upright and tall as we head towards it, the cold of the day making sure that the people, women and men alike, are busy working more inland, where the main town should probably lie. All the better to not get spotted beforehand, I guess.

"Weaponsmith?" I ask disapprovingly. "That seems like a dangerous class of smiths."

"Which is basically you," Sena jabs, running around me and Toothless in circles. "God, is it great to be back!"

You did_ use to forge weapons,_ Toothless points out.
/Right?

"Yeah, but not for myself," I mutter. "Save for the cannon."

Save for my prosthetic, Toothless says, and I glare at him.

"Don't make me feel-"

"HOME!" Sena yells, absentmindedly throwing snow up into the air (and my face) in delight. I can't help but smile at the sight of the snow being thrown around so carelessly. Snow comes a lot in Berk, but for it to be reveredâ€¦ that's sweet. I wipe off the snow and continue walking.

As we head the past the sets of houses, we approach more and more of the houses inland, but one dingy group, shunted into a small corner and wedged into a valley, catches my eye.

"Hey," I say, pointing to the houses. From there emits the only noise around. "What's that?"

"That'sâ€¦ umâ€¦" Sena begins nervously, not quite meeting my eyes. "That's the lower village."

"Lower?" I ask, raising my eyebrows. "It looks even with the other parts of the village."

"Um, I guess soâ€¦." he says, his cheerful demeanor disappearing. "It's..."

"It's?" I ask.

"...Home," Sena whispers, being incredibly careful not to draw anyone's attention, as if there were any in the first place.

"Homeâ€¦" I mutter. As I say so, I get a small pang of homesickness towards Berk. Astrid, the twins, Fishlegs, damn, even Snotlout I miss. I wonder if I'll get a chance to visit Berk after all of this is done.

Not anytime soon, Toothless says truthfully, nudging me and Sena towards the smallish corner of the village.

I ignore Toothless's words. True as they are, I don't want to hear them.

Sorry, he mutters, pawing the ground nervously.

"But I thought you were really enthusiastic on coming back," I tell Sena, ignoring Toothless's. I make no attempt to see if his feelings were hurt or not, too.

"Yeah, I was happy to be back, butâ€¦ are you really going to see my group?"

"Group?"

"Yeah," he replies. "Thieves, beggars, and black market. We're so hated by the rest of the village that we aren't even invited to the town."

"I'm sure they'll be delighted to have you back," I tell Sena confidently. "You've been away for quite a while."

"They? The townspeople, or the thieves?" he shoots, eyeing the sloping hill that leads to the town with spite. "They hate me both."

As I fall silent, I feel the drop of mirth in Sena's mind to be almost piercing to me myself. He was happy that his home was in his sight, but he's not happy with the idea of actually returning back to them. I can't help but look into Sena's thoughts. I can't go that far, because he doesn't really have an inner flame, but I can sense his emotions swimming in his head, like coloured clouds swirling about in the infinite universe of his mind. Pain. Betrayal. Mistreat.

These must be the things that Sena does not want me to see. No wonder why Sena is feeling so down. What has hurt him throughout the past will only hurt me as well because I care for Sena so much. Maybe it would be bad if I saw what they didâ€¦ I know how to use a bow now, too.

"So you can just leave me here," Sena says with a broken voice. "I'll be fine from here now, alright? It's beenâ€¦ nice meeting you."

He begins to walk away on his own, and my thoughts race with conflict. Sena will be safe there, for the meantime, but will he beâ€¦ safe? Will he have to resort to stealing once again to get his food? I don't think the black market holds anything that will be of high price, if there even is a black market to begin with.

Sena does not look back as he trudges on through the snow. But do I sense himâ€¦ crying?

I run and grab his hand tightly and hold on. He ceases his walking and turns back to me, silently wiping away the first tears of his spite and fears.

"If you think that we're not going to make sure that you're 100 percent sure that you're safe, we're not letting you go anywhere," I say, looking at him straight in his eyes. His eyes meet mine with their full force, blazing something between pain and malice.

"But they'll just hurt me when you're gone," he says. "Better you leave now. Otherwise you might see me turn into a thief again."

I think these words thoroughly. Sena has a point. Those people will punish Sena for sure, regardless of what we do to send him off. Butâ€¦ maybe they won't, if we don't just send him off.

"We're going with you," I tell him quite bluntly.

Sena's eyes widen in shock and he tries to pull away from my grip. I don't budge.

"Toothless still wants to know more about the Midland dragons," I

explain. "I thought that your house would be enough-"

"They have spare houses up in town," Sena cuts in, trying to relinquish himself from my hand.

"We might as well keep to your house-"

"No," he whispers fiercely. "That place is too tainted for you. I don't want your kindheartedness to change because of those people."

As if I could be tainted after all I've been through in Berk pre-Toothless. I shake my head.

"I don't want your smile and energy to go to change because of those people," I reply. "Think of it; if they can't hurt you, then they can't convince you to become a thief again, right?"

By 'convince', of course, I mean 'force to steal otherwise be severely harassed'. But I don't tell Sena that.

Sena looks at me for what might as well be the longest time ever before looking down at my hand and nodding.

"I really appreciate your help," he says gratefully, pulling me in for a quick hug. "They probably won't hurt me if you two are around, but don't go all over head to protect me if something goes wrong."

"Of course," I say, smiling only half-heartedly, because I know very well that I and Toothless will fight to the death for him. Which is a fight we can't lose, because Toothless is a dragon and I'm immortal. Sena pulls away and turns toward the valley.

I hear Sena inhale deeply as he begins to walk forward. To my relief, Toothless brushes against my side gently and coos, but does not say anything.

"I'm sorry," I say, patting his snout gently. He croons without saying anything. Maybe he doesn't want to talk right now. It's funny how this kind of thing happens. When you're alright but you don't want to say anything, because even if you're ok, your mind isn't, and talking to others right now would seriously hurt yourself by adding in even more thoughts, so you just shut up and let these thoughts pass first before you feel happy again.

To my surprise, Toothless coos again.

We walk down the trailless path under Sena's lead, footsteps marking our movements along the white snow, which remains marked there. It reminds me a lot of someone's innocence being stepped on, leaving a dent that will stay dented there until the body accepts it as something that simply happens in life and thus the snow is covered by more snow in there.

We reach the first house, which is basically a set of shabby boards thrown together to make a sensible square of walls and roof, and from there do I see the rest of the lower village. It's a complex of broken down houses and beggars waiting along the only street that it has, the people walking about and even fighting each other for food.

The women stay about in their houses, washing the clothes, while the men drink away outside, merrily enjoying their miserable lives that taint innocent people like Sena.

Toothless growls next to me. He can understand the air of darkness here, even if it's blazing daylight.

As we pass the houses aligning the littered road, some of the people point at Toothless, and some even call out names, to which Toothless snarls back at them. At one time, someone even throws a rotten fish at him, causing him to slit his eyes in aggression.

I never thought that I'd see someone treat fish this badly, he growls, his snout breathing hot air in disapproval. _The fish in Berk is way better, right?_

Grateful that he's back on speaking terms with me, I nod.

Look at the people, he says. _Their clothes are horrible. Rags and filth! Stormfly would cringe at the sight. And the smell! Ugh, so much rum. And vomit. Is that a shirtless man standing over there?_

"Oh, no," I say, glancing at Sena, who walks past determinedly.

"OI! Sena!" A man with formidable clothes yells, throwing an apple core at him. Toothless deflects it and snarls. "We thought you were dead for life!"

The man, standing outside one of the houses, walks forward in an attempt to greet him, but Sena steps backwards and glares at him.

"I am because of you and your little 'village'," Sena spits at the man, causing me to think of what this man might have done.

"And these people!" he says, taking no interest in Sena's words at all. "Such royalty in clothes. What did you do to convince them to come to my beautiful complex?"

"They came of their own accord," Sena hisses. "Shut up."

"Such boldness! This dragon will sell for such a high price..." the man says, stroking his unwashed beard. "When are you going to-"

"I said shut up," Sena spits, turning heel and walking onwards.

"Your little boy as well!" he calls after him. "He'll be a perfect collection to our thief band."

Sena gives me an apologetic look as I near him. The path has gone steeper and more littered with trash. Toothless bringing up the rear, snarling at random objects and people, who don't seem to mind at all that there's a dragon in town.

Sena nods, as if he can sense my thoughts. "We're really familiar with dragons," he says. "We get one more or so often, and they sometimes stay, but we can never talk to them."

"These people..." I begin.

"Yeah," he says. "They're like this."

"And this is how youâ€¦"

"Yes."

"Oh. Sorry."

The people begin noticing Sena's presence, some calling his name out and some throwing stuff at him, and inadvertently, me, to which Toothless blocks with his tail or simply incinerates it with his fire. The people seem taken aback, but return to their measly work, if it can be called work, as if nothing happened.

"You'd think I was less popular here," he says with a hint of a smirk. I nod.

As we walk on, I can't help but see people creeping up on Toothless, or more like, the bags that he's carrying. He notices this and scares them off with threats, but one even has the nerve to jump on him, to which I raise my bow immediately, causing him to slide off and slouch away, but with a little piece of bread in his hand as he does. Toothless resists the urge to shoot him.

I swear, the next person who sees me as play toys is going to have a talk with my claws, he says, his claws appearing with a _shing_ as he says this.

I offer him to walk in between Sena and I, and he does that, deflecting a piece of tin thrown Sena, who seems to be ignoring all these cries of either joy or malice.

"It's how we greet homecoming people here," he explains. "We haven't had new people in a while, so returning people are the greatest source of excitement here."

I nod, not wanting to show how much I dislike the people here already. Well, except Sena and Toothless.

"Here it is," Sena says, walking to the end of the road. "My home."

I take a good look at it. A pair of walls erected from wooden logs on each side, a flat wooden slab covering the two walls, serving as a roof, the back of the house being a series of jumbled up stuff piled so high that it basically becomes a wall. The front of the house has no wall. To add to the house's dimness, the whole place is basically the half size of my own house- without the second floor. It's like someone cut a barn in half, which might as well been what the two foundations used to be. Inside, a standing woman is cutting a rough piece of bread so cold that she has to open it with a knife, talking to a sitting boy around Sena's age, the former having black, wavy hair and the latter brown.

Sena turns towards me and asks me if he could have a piece of bread.

"Take all of it if you want," I say, but Sena only takes a bun and walks into the house.

"Ma," he says, stopping in front of the house, just where the snow stops. "I'm home."

The two turn their heads, and immediately the young boy jumps on him, yelling something incomprehensible. The woman drops the knife and rushes in to embrace her son as well. They exchange a few words, but all there really is is the quiet hug of two people who are happy to have each other back. The boy looks at Sena with joy as well.

"And I thought he didn't know what care was," I tell Toothless, who snorts.

Well, you don't need to care something that you already have, he says. _Since he's been gone for so long, of course the people care._

"Yeah, but have they never hugged each other at /all before this?" I ask in horror, remembering the way Sena recoiled when I first nudged him.

Seems like it, Toothless asks grimly. _Shall we go in?_

"Let's wait outside first and see what happens," I say, touching his snout gently.

"How did you get back here?" his mother asks, her rigid voice far too strained for any sounds of crying. "And what did you do to get this bread?"

"Yeah," the younger, but not really all that young boy says. "That must come from a palace. Not even the city bread is this soft."

"It's from these people," Sena says with a smile, pulling away and gesturing towards us.

"Oh, my," she whispers. "New people?"

"Hi," I say awkwardly, waving at her from the snow outside.

"You have a dragon," the young boy points out in awe. "Cool."

"Well, come in, come in!" she says, giving me the first smile I've seen from her. "Don't stay in the snow that long."

From what I can sense, she's never said anything like this to Sena before, Toothless tells me as we enter. _She must be thrilled to have him back._

"If only she showed it when he was here before," I mutter.

As we enter, I see the mass amounts of stuff jumbled about. A table sits next to two chairs by the wall, around it cutlery and knives and, to my horror, meat. The beds lie next to the back of the house, a pillow and a blanket for each of the inhabitants. The rest, iron and weapons, are scattered in a pile near the front. I see a worn out bola as I walk past it.

"I guess I should introduce myself first, right?" she says with a

small smile. She must not be used to smiling often. "I'm Aki."
Toothless lets me know that _Aki_ means Autumn.

"I'm Hiccup," I say, then pointing to the grinning Night Fury, "And this is Toothless."

"My," she says, looking at Toothless intently, the latter crooning happily. "Is this your dragon?"

"He's my _friend,_ miss," I say, wrapping my arm around Toothless's neck. "And he's not _mine_."

At least you got something _right,_ Toothless jokes, causing me to tickle his neck.

Ah! Don't do that! he says, trying his best not to squirm as he continues to look at Aki and co.

"What's that word?" I ask him mentally, grinning widely at Toothless's attempts to stay still.

Um... fish! I scratch him harder. _Oh, alright... sorry!_

Smiling, I stop tickling and laugh quietly.

I take that back, Toothless growls. _You're right _some_ of the time._

"I'm Ken," the boy next to Sena says before I can tickle him again. "Sena just told me that you're awesome."

"Don't believe him much," I joke. "He likes to exaggerate a lot."

"He also said that you have armpit hair! Is that true?"

My face turns toward the still-innocent-faced Sena. "Hm?" he asks.

Hm? Toothless snorts, rubbing in my embarrassment. I tickle him even harder, his black scales tingling at my scratches. _Wha- no! Not near that spot!_

These two idiots! Why don't they know how to shut up? Especially in front recently met people! They're out of their minds! Preposterous, I say! It's not unoften that I go through an embarrassing moment of my life, but I've always had people to laugh it off with! And these people- talking about my- my _armpits!_ Argh!

"Yes, I do," I say, forcing myself to grin despite my wants to not. Needless to say (even though I /am saying it), an awkward silence follows at this.

"We're all very thankful that you got him back safely," Aki says hastily, trying to cover the curious looks from Sena and Ken. "You must be hungry."

I look at the three, and how less they've gotten to eat all through their life.

"Nah, we're good," I say, looking for an opening. "How about you guys?"

"We'reâ€¦" Sena begins.

"...Fine," Aki quickly finishes for him. "Thanks a lot for- is that _bread,_ Sena?"

Sena holds up the bread that I gave him to her. "Um, yes, why?"

"Those aren't yours, are they?" she says disapprovingly, her eyes suddenly cross. "All my life I've taught you not to steal, and yet you steal food from me every day."

Suddenly I understand why Sena's mother has never as much as hugged Sena before. It's because she didn't want her son to turn out to be a thief.

"I gave him that," I say quickly, trying to avert the danger that an angry mother can bring.

"You did?" she says, her expression clearing immediately. "That's... nice of you."

"I want you to have it, ma," he says, handing the bread to her. "It's the first thing that I haven't stolen from anybody."

"Itâ€¦ is?" she says, falling silent as her coarse hands touch the tender bread. Even the flight from Halla took a toll onto the bread, it is still slightly warm, and with its warmth, tenderness.

"It is," I smile, reaching into the bag and pulling out two more buns. "Here."

"This isâ€¦" Aki says, awestruck by how much food she's managed to see within a day. And I'm not making this as a joke. She is _shocked_. "City bread."

"Straight from the markets of Halla," I say proudly. "Your sons should like them."

"Oh, this one's not mine," she says, setting the bread aside delicately and motioning towards Ken. "He lives a few doors away."

"Yep, Mr. Hiccup," Ken pipes up happily.

"Just Hiccup, please," I say, blushing. Toothless gnaws my hand Toothlessly. "Ow!"

"Tell her the story," Sena says, turning towards me. "She'll be thrilled."

"I believe I will be." She smiles, walking backwards and making room for the rest of us. She looks at the floor ashamedly. "Sorry. It's not much."

"It's alright, ma'am," I say. Suddenly I realise how little I've really managed to talk to a female adult before. My life had only a

few adults who cared about me, of recent only men, and the other adults didn't really talk a lot to the teenagers. So this has to be the first time sinceâ€¦ since mom.

Aki sees my distraught face and gives me a smile, motioning me to sit down.

"Just call me Aki," she says, smiling. "Everybody calls me that."

"Umâ€¦ okay." I sit on the floor and Toothless stands behind me, watching the surroundings of the house intently.

Aren't you coming? I ask.

Nah, I'm good, he coos, sitting down behind to me and giving the now sitting Sena a croon. Ken looks at Sena in awe.

"Wow! You've _talked_ to him?" Ken whispers not softly at all. Sena nods towards me, smiling.

"Wellâ€¦" I begin, resisting the urge to lean on Toothless's comfy neck. "We found Sena on an island."

"What was he doing on an _island?_" Aki gasps, looking at Sena worriedly.

"I was on the ships with Father, ma," he begins. At my nod, he continues. "And then I was trying to look for land when the ships suddenly left without me. The current was strong, but it took the ships away faster than I could reach them."

"Wait, you mean you twoâ€¦?" I begin, but quickly cut myself off when I see the wide-eyed look on Sena's face.

"We're distant," Aki admits, glancing towards Sena and shaking her head. "No, Sena, it's nothing to be ashamed about."

"It isâ€¦ for me," he pouts.

"He's a city person, and I'm from here. So the city didn't really approve of the two of us together," she says with a hint of sadness in her voice.

She was sold here, Toothless says in my mind grimly. /And he wasâ€¦

Toothless! I say, growling in a way that would have made Toothless himself proud.

It's the truth, Toothless says matter-of-factly. _Deal with it._

"You two can understand each other?" Aki asks curiously.

"Well, most of the time," I mumble, to which Toothless rolls his eyes.

"I was brought back here as soon as I had Sena," she says grimly. "But he's a loveable son."

"Wha- really?" Sena asks, looking at his mother in shock.

"Yes, you are," she says, waving a hand airily. "I just didn't like the way you stole stuff from the markets all the time."

"Father liked to give me some," he mumbles. "You just never listened."

"Have you been feeding him all this time as well?" Aki asks, looking at us with gratitude. "Thank you so much." \

Oh, the feeling of being indebted towards those younger than you.

"He knew how to hunt by himself, though," I say, pulling out Sena's bow from the bag that holds all of Sena's other stuff. "He even shot a rabbit for us."

"That's sweet," Aki says honestly (Toothless-approved). "At least the life here hasn't completely stained him."

"I've even got a bow of my own somewhere here!" Sena says enthusiastically, getting up and looking for the weapon. "Hold on..."

"So, what happened after that?" Aki asks me as Sena rummages through the mass called the back wall, smiling.

"We took him to the tradeport, where he he got all-" I heave the rest of the bag off Toothless, who coos in relief, "-this." I hand the bag over to Sena's mother.

Once again, Aki looks awestruck. "All this?"

"And none of them stolen!" Sena calls from the pile behind. "Seriously!"

"Not even these?" she asks in disbelief, holding up the (really) expensive tunics. "These must cost a fortune..."

"That's what he said too," I say. "But I gave them to him anyway."

Hey! Don't I _get credit?_ Toothless asks, looking at me with a fake-pouty look.

"Alright," I laugh. "Toothless got us the supplies necessary for making trade possible." Toothless croons.

"Those must be very expensive things to get things like this," she comment, trying hard not to look even deeper into the contents of the bag.

"I get credit too!" Sena says, running back with a small hawthorn bow that's obviously been worn out through usage. I wonder where he's gotten to use itâ€¦ "I was the one that discovered the supplies."

I was wondering when he'd say that, Toothless says with a sigh. _Damn. Makes me feel unimportant right away._

Nah, I think, patting him gently. _You're great._

"And then we all took off after a big fight and then we ended up here!" he says excitedly. "Though I guess that I was kinda burdening you then."

"No, you weren't," I snap, but Sena only laughs.

"Don't listen to him, ma," he jokes. "He likes to exaggerate a lot."

"_What?!_" I say, rolling my eyes, then quickly stop the second I remember that Sena's mother is around.

"You've changed my son so much," she says, holding up the bread that I gave her. "We really can't repay you, can't we?"

"Oh, we don't need any repayment-" I begin quickly.

"Actually, you do," Sena says, getting up and showing the worn up mattress-and-pillow behind him. "I thought you wanted to know more about dragons? You can sleep here for the night."

"We can find a-" I begin, but Toothless nudges me in annoyance. I stop my words.

Listen to him, he says. _Don't let his mother down._

"Alright," I say reluctantly. "Thank you for your kindness."

"Oh, it's your kindness, mostly," she says, nodding towards the buns in her hands. She distributes them to the youths and raises her eyebrows, as if to let us join as well.

I look at them, then the food bag, then at them again. A decision forms in my mind.

"Here," I say, taking out six more and handing them all into her (shocked) hands. "Take all of these as well."

"Oh, myâ€|" she whispers. "This isâ€|"

"A lot!" Ken interrupts. "Are you kidding-"

"Thanks a million, Hiccup," Sena beams, grabbing a bun from her hands and taking a huge bite into it.

Glancing at him devouring such valuable food (well, in /their eyes, anyway), they hastily follow suit. They are careful to savour the food in their mouths as they eat it slowly, bit by bit, bite by bite, and slice by slice. As soon as the first one is gone, they put the other ones away for keeping.

"Not hungry?" I ask, raising an eyebrow.

"Good things are hard to come by," Aki says with a sigh.

"We might be staying here for a while," I say, but not to get her hopes up.

"That's nice of you." She smiles and beckons us towards the beds.

"Um, no thanks," I say, leaning back towards Toothless, who has changed his position from sidelong to behind me (and is growling at my abrupt decision to annoy him by resting on his side without asking first). "I'm good."

"Do I get the bed, then?" Sena asks hopefully.

"I guess that would be the case," Aki says hastily. "I'm still not really sure if this is going to be worth the trouble Sena got you all into."

"Pfft," Sena says, causing all of us to look at him. "I'm taking him on a tour of the city right after this."

"You are?" I say, getting up with a start.

"Of course," he says, pushing me back onto Toothless. "I'm going to show you that Rajin as well."

As everyone gives him a confused look, Toothless quickly translates this to 'the girl that I like'.

"Alright, then," I say, patting Toothless's head gently. "But right now, recreation time."

"You bet," Sena says, hugging his mother tightly.

Oh, the wonders of having a loving (and living) mother.

* * *

><p>LN: Alright, this is why I'm keeping Sena in despite you guys wanting Hiccup and Toothless to be alone together:**

Sena is a representation of a young boy that has been neglected all his life. Since Toothless is already friends with Hiccup, it would be hard to give him a "neglected" scene, because he's with, you know, Hiccup. Not only that, you can see the change Sena goes through during the first parts of his meetings with Hiccup, from a petty thief to a little brother image to Hiccup, which is something that Hiccup and Toothless have already gone through in the movie. Since Toothless is supposedly older than Hiccup (but close, and is disregard-able) in my universe, Toothless is more like the pushy protective big brother to Hiccup, whereas Sena is more like a little brother to Hiccup, and gives him the impression of someone who he can really protect, much like how Toothless has felt. And you can see, that under Toothless's care, Hiccup does not grow physically stronger, because Toothless tries to do everything for him, but when Hiccup has to protect someone like Sena, he understands that he can't only stay under the shade of Toothless's protective wings forever (even if they will be together forever), and eventually, Sena teaches Hiccup how to shoot a bow, brings him into trade, and makes decisions that affected everyone's life.

**tl;dr: Sena is like Hiccup's younger brother. Deal with it.

**

****Glossary:****

****Aki- Japanese for Autumn, like Toothless said.****

****Ken- Japanese for dagger. ****

14. Traits

****Just to let you remember, adding -son to the back of a name is the equivalent to adding "Mr./Ms." to the front of it, denoting respect.

* * *

><p>S

The instant that I set my hands on the fish, I was grabbed by a pair of hands and lifted up by the scruff of the neck. I felt the long arms that forced me to hover above the ground slightly. I looked at my captivor frightfully; large and tall with a pair of powerful arms. I wasn't going anywhere, I thought. There was no way I could get out of this mess without being messed up with first.

"Well! Another boy from the Dump, isn't it?" he asked, giving me a vile grin. "You're not bad if you got this far without being caught."

I hang my head down in shame. I had failed my parents again. It was the second time this week, and my mother would have to go without food for another night. This was unacceptable not for only me, but also the other thieves that often stolen from the city's markets- no doubt that the security would ramp up, and my friends would have a harder time getting what they needed to sustain their families. Of course, some of them were just here for the fun of it, because their parents worked for the Dump's leader, but for me, my mother refused to work for them, and often I wonder why.

"Well, you're an unfortunate one," he sneered, pulling me down towards the entrance of the town. "Or, should I say, fortunate. We don't want crime in the city, do we?"

"No, sir," I said resignedly.

"Don't do it again, alright?" he said, setting me down roughly and watched with vindictive pleasure as I turned around and made my way back to the Lower Village. "Or you'll be in a lot more trouble than just this!"

I sighed, observing the thin path grimly as I walked through, the path that divided between the city, the port, which was frozen, and the Dump, which everyone in town called the place where I lived. It was a harsh place, but it was livable. It wasn't like people were being carted off to become slaves on a daily basis, as the other villages to the east were doing. We were fairly kept to ourselves, but I never really understood why my mother refused to work for the leader. I didn't know much about him, but my friends often told me that he gave out lavish foods for their families- something that my mother shook her head in disgust at.

"Hey!" a voice called to my left. I turned to see Ken running towards me, his hair billowing in the wind. Well, so was mine. But I didn't really care. I felt kind of crushed.

"Hello, Ken," I nodded, managing to give him a small smile. Among the bands of thieves of our village, there were groups that were sent by the leader, who were the older kids that knew what they were doing, and then there were the ones that came of their own accord, like me. And Ken. But he liked to hide in the city outskirts and not really steal anything. Sometimes a fish here and there, but he hardly ever went into the market himself. He liked to wait for me outside and we'd talk. I didn't know why he liked to talk to me so much. We were both finding a way to survive, and he was talking to me. Hardly anyone does that.

"Bad day?" he asked, taking the snowy path by the side as his walkway as we walked back to the village.

"Very," I said, gritting my teeth. "Terrible, in fact."

For some reason, talking to him made me feel better. But he's never going to know that. He was just another thief like me. Why should he deserve sentimentality?

"Well— then maybe you should have this," he said, fishing something from his pack.

"Huh?" I asked, turning around to see the little potato in his hands.

"Found this not far from the outskirts," he said. "Don't worry, I have more."

I wanted to know why I should have any reason to worry about him, but I got rid of the thought quickly as I accepted the fish from him, being sure to avoid making contact with his hands. I didn't see the point. Ma always said that it was wrong to be touched, so I always stayed away from other people whenever I could. And why was he giving me this again?

"...Thank you," I said, remembering the words that merchants often said to buyers after purchasing something. Unlike other villages, we used coins as a means of buying, not trading goods. Sure, there was a bartering center up ahead, but that was for bigger stuff that coins couldn't buy, like wagons or large weapons. As I say these words, though, I feel like they are simply words to air, giving no mist of emotion at all. Why did merchants say this? It has no real emotion in it at all. It doesn't make the sayer any happier. It serves as nothing but a means to say, 'You got your stuff. Go away.'

"Wow," Ken said, giving me a look of disbelief.

"What?" I asked, pocketing the potato. It feels warm, but what does warmth do? It irritates the skin.

"You said 'Thank you'," he said. "I've never heard you say that before."

"Don't think about it much," I growled. "I'm only saying this because

you're giving me something."

"Oh, really?" he asked, laughing. What was so funny about it? "Seems more like you're not the emotionless person that the other people like to say after all."

"What do you mean?" I snapped, turning on my heel and glaring at him. "I've known far worse things than you. I've been beaten up and you never have. I've cried myself to sleep before. I've felt the pain in getting caught and thrown out of village before. Isn't that sadness, a kind of emotion? How can you say that I'm emotionless?"

Ken stopped and gave me an apologizing look. Another thing that I never understand. What feelings are in there when your shoulders droop, your smile, something I don't know the meaning of either, disappears, and your eyes become slightly more shut than they usually are?

"Sorry," he murmured, showing the signs aforementioned. "Just wanted to know."

"Whatever," I say, absent of any feelings in those words. "I'm going home."

"Sena."

Ken grabbed my hand tightly. I refused to look at him. I usually cringe at any kind of touch, but he was halfway acceptable, as Ma had once said.

"Sena."

I don't look back as I drag him back towards the Lower Village. Why should I?

"Sena!" an older voice yells.

"Wha-" I turn around, my eyes focused on where Ken was moments ago. In his place, is Hiccup.

"Sena, where are we going? I thought we were going to tour the market."

Hiccup's eyes show puzzlement whereas mine shows confusion. I try to sort out my thoughts. Ken's still at home—that means that Hiccup and Toothless—oh.

It was all a memory. All of it.

"Sorry," I mutter, this time my words full of emotion. "I was kinda into the past."

"Of this market?" he asks, giving me a pat on the shoulder. I don't cringe at his touch, either. How different it was from years ago when I resented every physical contact. "It's alright. We don't have to go there—"

"No, we have to," I say determinedly, turning back towards the city. "Toothless needs to know more about the dragons, right?"

"He's not here," Hiccup points out. "For some reason he strongly objected. I mean, the people don't mind dragons, right?"

"Sort of," I mutter. "The villagers would be thrilled to see oneâ€¦ that can't flyâ€¦ with _human._ I guess Toothless read my thoughts and decided not to come with us."

"Did he?" Hiccup asks thoughtfully. "Hm."

"Sorry that I didn't say anything," I say. "I wasn't thinking straight earlier."

"We all have those flashbacks of time," Hiccup reassures me.

"Yeahâ€¦" I mumble. As we reach the first houses, I stop.

"What is it?" Hiccup asks, his hands on the bow with alert. "Is there anything?"

"Nothing," I say, kicking the ground nervously. "I just realized how emotionless I once was."

"Huh?" he asks, the grip on the slung bow relaxing.

"I mean, back then before, all I knew was pain and lies," I said. "I didn't know what trust was, and I've always had to live by myself. I saw finding food for Ma as a duty, not something done out of sentimentality, because I didn't know what it was before. Well, I knew it, but not as something that is attributed to warmth and care. I just thought it was something people did to not be rude. I never truly felt what it was untilâ€¦ you know."

"Hm?" Hiccup asks, inclining his head to the side in a playful manner.

"Until you took care of me," I say. "I always had to tend to my own wounds, but that day, I couldn't, and I thought I was going to die. And then you showed up and saved me."

"And then I showed up and Toothless saved you," he corrects, laughing. "I couldn't do a single thing to save your skin."

"You did hug me, I think," I mutter. "You know, the morning right after that."

"And then you were all like 'What the hell are you doing?!'" Hiccup jokes. "But it's all good now, ain't it?"

"It is," I agree. "No wonder why Toothless goes with you everywhere. you're too kind." Then I realize something. "Am I taking up your time?"

"Even Toothless needs his time alone," Hiccup says, but I can see doubt in his voice. I know for a fact that Toothless does _not_ like being isolated for a long time. Which is strange for Night Furies, because they're solitary beings. I still remember that day when he was left alone too long and he nearly got himself killed. Ouch. I improvise to make the trip as fast as possible.

"I think that he's fine," Hiccup says, shaking his head. "He just told me that he's trying to imagine himâ€¦ uh, dating Stormfly."

"What? You read my thoughts?" I ask, looking him in shock. "And Toothless's?"

"It's a Night Fury thing," he mutters. "Even I don't know how to use it properly."

"It's an Astrid thing," I joke, causing Hiccup's face to turn red.

"Now, who was that Rajin you were talking about?" Hiccup shoots back, causing my face to turn red (but flutter in delight) as well.

When I don't say anything, Hiccup smirks. "There. We're both equally embarrassed."

"Mm," I say dreamily, trudging towards the city.

The city is strongly built, with what the raids that happen ever so often, but the market, which is in the center of the city, the houses surrounding and cascading in lengths, which sort of reminds me of Halla. Or Halla reminds me of Nord. It's not that different, except that Nord doesn't have a tyrant leader. We're an anarchy, I think.

"Hm," Hiccup says, looking at the alleys that align our advance. "They're clean."

"It's all hidden under the snow," I remark. "But yeah, the streets are pretty clean."

"Oh, you mean like-" Hiccup bends down and scoops up a huge chunk of snow, revealing a few rotten fruit cores and a worn out shoe amid the debris and snow. "-this?"

"Um, yeaah," I say, looking at the shoe nervously. "Are you sure that thing doesn't have a pair?"

"I'm not sure," Hiccup says, observing the shoes keenly. "This looks a lot like its been missing its pair for a while."

"How would you know?" I ask, not meaning to make it sound condescending. I give him an apologetic look. "Sorry."

"If its other half was here, then that would mean this would have to be used quite a lot, but not worn out enough to be thrown away separately. And this shoe's run out on life." He says all of this while walking, not acknowledging my apology.

Wondering if he missed it, I repeat it again.

"Sorry."

"For what?" he asks, turning towards me. "I heard you the first time, but I thought you were in your thoughts or something."

"Uh, nothing," I mumble, turning away in embarrassment. Then, out of

the same embarrassment, I turn back again. "Did you really not notice anything?"

"Notice what?" Hiccup asks, scratching his head quizzically. "All I know is that this shoe doesn't have its other half."

"Wellâ€¦ I asked you how you knew, and I said it in a challenging way," I say. "I thought you might have been offended or something."

"Oh, _that,_ " Hiccup laughs. "No, I'm not offended. It's a boys thing, isn't it, to challenge?"

I eye him confusedly. "Huh?"

"All boys want to be strong," he explains. "We want to show our power, and prove that we are superior over others. We often challenge others to see if they really have the power that they talk about."

"But you don't," I say. "You always let others show their power and accept them." I bite my lip in thought. "Um, like when you said that you'd never get as good as me when it comes to archery."

"That's also a boy thing," he says. "You know, to accept the power of others."

"You're speaking as if I'm not a boy," I mutter.

"Uh, well, Ken _did_ say you didn't know a lot of this stuff," he points out.

"I know," I moan, mentally facepalming myself at my stupidity. "I just didn't think I was going to be that stupid to not know what my own gender was like."

"You're not stupid," Hiccup smirks. "Well, at least when it doesn't involve girls."

I spin around, glaring at the older, but still sort of my height, boy.

"You did _not_ say that," I growl threateningly. "You so did _not._"

"The truth about love," Hiccup begins, but I'm on him in two seconds flat. I knock him to the ground, his back tumbling into the snow as I stand over him in superiority.

Well, at least I _thought_ I was superior. Until Hiccup says the next words.

"Is that it sort of can turn you into a jerk," he finishes, getting up slowly (but leaning on the bow for support).

I stare at him, wondering whether I should be hanging my head in defeat or glaring at him in anger.

In the end, I choose defeat. I shouldn't be hurting Niison, anyway. He certainly didn't mean to hurt me. He just made a joke, and I took

it a bit too seriously.

"Sorry," I mutter again, holding out a hand. He takes it and gets up slowly, a smile on his face, and a lot of snow on his back. I brush it away awkwardly, hoping the act of apology would suffice.

"See? Exactly what I meant," Hiccup jokes, patting my shoulder. "But all boys are like that. It's a boys thing."

"It is," I agree, laughing as we continue our walk.

****T****

I eye Sena's mother curiously, cooing softly at intervals as she pretends not to notice me. To be honest, I'm trying to pretend to not notice her as well, but it's just really hard, especially since I've never been in the presence of a mother before. Alright, there's the nest with the Queen, but she's not a mother to me, since I hated her, and the other dragons there usually didn't raise their young in the nest, as tha would be suicide, and the mothers (and most of the other dragons) don't talk to me anyway, so I never really talked to them either.

So, with my newborn sociability (which applies only to people Hiccup trusts, but it's still better than no one) I want to know what mothers are like. Are they caring like Hiccup? What do they do with their nestlings as they hatch, as they grow? I've never known. I was abandoned on an island. So I want to see what a mother with her son does.

The problem is, Sena is exploring/touring/sneaking off to show his crush with Hiccup, so Ken is the only person in the household that's a child, and then there's Aki, of course, but she's talking to Ken quite interestedly, thus excluding me from any kind of conversation that I might possibly be able to speak. But Ken will have to suffice as a 'son'.

"Sena's changed a lot," Ken says, biting into a piece of stale bread (he refused the bread I offered him, so I ate it instead). "In a good way."

"That's very true," Aki agrees, cooking a piece of meat in a strange contraption that could store fire inside and heat up things above it. "He's not a thief anymore, from what I can see."

"Is that a good thing or a bad thing? I thought everybody stole for a living."

"Sena has found a better way of living than living off others. I hope that he stays that way."

I make a mental note to myself: Mothers hope for their offspring to be good.

"Like, trading?" Ken pipes up. "Will he become a city merchant?"

"It depends on what he decides to be. Frankly, I'll be very happy if he does get a place in the city."

"I think trading is hard," Ken says. "Stealing is easier."

Aki lets out a long sigh.

"It's because you've only tried one thing," she says. "But I don't blame you. You've been raised here all your life. But have you seen the things that Sena brought for us? He and his friend Hiccup get those from trade. Have we ever gotten anything that good from stealing?"

"No, not really," he admits. "Is this why you never steal? Because you know it won't make a good living for you?"

Such innocence, I think in my head. _In such a tainted place._

"Yes," she says after some thought.

"But without Sena stealing food for youâ€¦"

"I know," she says. "I'm grateful for that. But what's wrong to me is still wrong to Sena."

Second note: _Mothers tend to teach their offspring to do good things. And they're grateful for the things their offspring has done for them._

"So, will I get to trade as well?" Ken asks hopefully. "Maybe I could get the other people to try as well."

"I'm not sure, but things are changing," Aki says. "Sena has new ideas and feelings now. He's not the little *_Mutonj_*we've known of. He's a happy boy now. And he's free to do what he feels right."

I quickly translate that into _emotionless boy._

"How about you?" Ken asks. "And me?"

"I'm fine where I am," she says. "You should follow Sena if he decides to stay in the city."

My ears perk up at her words. _She's fine?_ Hell no she's not. She's only saying that because she doesn't want to get in Sena's way.

Then I get another note: _Mothers are selfless and helpful people._

"We'll both go!" Ken says, jumping up and down. "I could take my family as well!"

"You'd have to convince them to stop working for the leader, first," she says offhandedly. "Which is going to be hard."

"But it can be done, right?"

Aki purses her lips for a second then smiles. She knows that it probably can't, because from what I've heard, Ken's parents have been here pretty much their whole life, and they don't know a lot about the outside world, except that it's not a great place.

"Let's see what Sena decides," Aki says finally. "You can ask him from then."

"Awesome!" Ken says. He gets up and heads for the door. "I'll go right now."

"Where?" she asks, worry settling on her face.

"Oh, to the town, _Akson._" Aki's face clears up right away. "I'll ask Sena and *_Norteson_* about what they think aboutâ€¦ change."

"Alright," she says, smiling. "Just don't go off in the wrong direction."

"Don't worry, Akson," he calls from the entrance. Then he sets off towards the road.

"My boy, Sena," she says with a happy sigh. "Finally knowing what friends are."

He sure is, I think to myself. _I wonder if I'll ever make some dragon friends as well._

This, of course, was supposed to be just a harmless thought, but of course it stings me as well as I say it, making it not all that harmless. Hiccup and I are one, of course, but even in closeness we can push each other away. Like when Hiccup nearly cried at a simple misunderstanding and I nearly fell apart. Sometimes, we have to find other friends as well. I mean, I'm not going to _abandon_ Hiccup, and I don't think I'd ever leave his side anyway (unless he asks), but it wouldn't hurt to talk to new dragons, make new allies, and share more stories with other dragons, all with Hiccup on my back, no? Just like how he's with Sena right now. The thing with Night Furies is, though, that we're just too solitary. We live on our own, and the only groups we stay in are with our young.

That's all I've really known about us, because _everybody_ in the nest has said some version of that, but all the other dragons have their allies, their friends, especially from other species of dragons. It's a tendency for Nightmares (**_Hita_**) and Nadders (**_Clou_**) to befriend each other, for example, but their friendships don't last all that long, because Nadders are incredibly (you guessed it) vain. But Stormfly and thatâ€¦ _Hita_ seem to get along with each other well enough. Grr. Just that thought makes my spine chill.

My thoughts echo in my thoughts over and over again. A dragon friend isn't going to compare to Hiccup, of course, but you don't compare friendships if you want them to last anyway.

"_Paxon,_ " A voice calls out. Excitement flowing at the strong Dragonese accent, my head turns towards the source of sound immediately.

Aki is sitting down, smiling at me in a way that means _Can we talk?_

"_You can speak Dragonese?_" I ask tentatively, narrowing my eyes very, very slightly in curiosity.

"_The older people in town can,_" she says, the vocals from her mouth coming out not in human language, but instead the deep rumble that dragons use to communicate to each other. "_I guess the perks of being old are finally showing._"

"_Why didn't you talk to me in front of that chai Ken?_" I ask, a hint of suspicion settling in.

"_He'd feel left out,_" she says. "_He likes to know everything that's put in front of him. He likes to learn a lot, that boy._"

"_Interesting,_" I say, even if the subject of Ken isn't all that interesting, compared to why Aki can speak such fluent Dragonese.

"_I suppose you want to know about the Northlands,_" she says. "_How they're in a state of war right now._"

"_I do,_" I say, cooing softly as I walk closer to her and sit down politely. "_Please tell._"

"_You and your boy-_"

"_He's not 'my boy'-_"

"_Alright. You and your friend come from the Southlands, which, from what I've heard from the stray dragons that end up in the Dump, is abundant with dragons._"

"_That's true,_" I say. "_But we don't have any wars._"

"_Why do you wish to go to the Northlands?_" she asks, tilting her head slightly. "_It's a dangerous place. There aren't many human settlements there because of all the wars that plague the lands._"

"_I wish to go find my kind,_" I say, deliberately leaving out the word _Isle of Night_ in case I say too much. "_There has been only one Night Fury in the Southlands, and that's me._"

"_Do you mean the one that single-handedly destroyed the Red Death?_" Aki asks, her eyes widening in surprise. "_The dragon that ended the war between humans and dragons?_"

"_Um, yes, that's me,_" I say, trying not to sound arrogant. "_But I didn't do it alone. Hiccup was alongside me the whole time._"

"_He was?_" she asks in disbelief. "_Does that explain the missing lower leg?_"

"_I think so,_" I say guiltily. "_I couldn't protect him from that._"

"_Well, all the dragons I've met said you did it alone,_" she continues briskly, as if nothing had happened, "_And it will be an issue to when you meet other dragons to the North, because they won't expect a human entering what has been dragon territory for so long._"

"_He's immortal,_" I tell her bluntly. "_And he isn't going to die because of the other dragons. He's got me to protect him._"

"_He's_ **immortal?*" she asks. "_Is my dragonese vocabulary messed up?_"

"_No, Akson,_" I say with a hint of a grin. "_Hiccup is immortal, and he said he'd go with me to find my kind._"

Aki gives me a long, long look.

"_There have been rumorsâ€¦_" she says slowly. "_About the Night Furies. They're not in the war, but they've failed to do their duty in keeping the peace. I don't blame them. This kind of thing needs cooperation from both sides, like you and your friend._"

"_Night Furies?_" I ask, my ears perking up. "_You've heard about more?_"

"_Everyone knows about them,_" she says. "_They're the defenders of peace. And it is said that amidst the war that rages on, the area around the Isle of Night is completely peaceful._"

"_The Isle of Night?_" I ask, standing up in surprise. I realize my mistake and sit down, but rather impatiently. "_Where?_"

"_No one really knows,_" she says. "_Not the dragons, not the humans. You see, Night Furies like you are quite s-_"

"_I know we're quite solitary,_" I say. "_But is the isle is in the middle of all the fighting?_"

"_I told you, no one really knows,_" she says with a sigh. "_I would tell you if I did, but then I wouldn't be here in the Dump, would I? I'd be working in the city as a bookkeeper._"

"_Why were you sold here, anyway?_" I ask, deciding that it would be worth her time to let this thing out.

"_Oh, so you've figured it out,_" she says. "_Not that I'd expect less from a Night Fury that can communicate with a human, but without speech._"

"_I don't do sign language, Akson,_" I joke.

"_I used to work in the city,_" she says, the afternoon sunlight glinting in her eyes. "_It was then when the Dump was only starting to form. _**Niison**_, as people called him, formed this originally founded this as an exile who were prosecuted for stealing and blackmail, which was against the strict law of the city. My parents were jewelry traders, but because of the war, cosmetics quickly lost their trend, and my parents were sent into bankruptcy._"

"_Ouch,_" I say.

"_To their luck, they still had a house, but they had no money to trade. So eventually I had to stealâ€¦ for them._"

"_And you can see where this story goes now,_" she says with a grim

smile. "_I got caught and was sold by the leaders of the City because they needed money to war against the other villages. Eventually, my husband bought me, and a few weeks after I sent to the Dump. That's where I had Sena._"

"_They_ **sold** _you?_" I growl, my snout flaring slightly. I know I figured this out before, but to hear it from her, and in such a way...

"_It's something that the Eastlands, which is the eastern part of the Midlands, did. We both did it. We had to, otherwise we'd lose the war. The same went for them. It was targeted mainly towards the richer families, that would often trade their riches forâ€ well, you know._"

"_Such madness,_" I growl. "_How do people see other people like that?_"

"_It's just something humans, do, Paxon,_" she says quietly. She flips her hair backwards as I try to process the madness of humanity and how lucky Hiccup isn't like that. "_I've never told Sena this before._"

"_I'm glad you haven't,_" I say. "_He only thinks that you ended up here because you have no money, right?_"

"_Yes._" She touches the ground softly. "_I guess you know why I disapprove of him stealing as well._"

"_Like you said, the story went downhill after you did that,_" I warble. "_But like Ken said..._"

"_I knew you were listening._" Aki smiles. "_Yes, I relied on him to survive. I hated his actions. But I couldn't hate him. I've never hugged him before, hardly ever spoken to him. Only on the nights that he came back foodless did I ever talk to him. But I was always grateful for him, even if I hated myself for it. I wonder if my parents thought the same._"

"_I think they would be happy for what you did, too,_" I coo.

A silence passes through us for a moment.

"_You have a great, friend, Paxon._"

"_You have a great son, Akson._"

Another silence passes through us. _So mothers are kind like this._

"_When are you going to set out for the Northlands?_"

"_Not long from now. It's only a matter of time before we head out._"

"..."

"..."

"_Thank you for taking care of my son._"

"_Hiccup did most of the caring. I just did the protecting._"

"_Well, in that case, thank you for protecting my son. And giving me a chance to practice my Dragonese._" She smiles._ "Is there anything I can do for you?_"

"_You just did,_" I croon. "_You just told me everything you knew about my species. And about the war._"

I watch the wind blow her hair softly, the light coming from the entrance illuminating her as she finds something to end the silence.

"..."

"..."

"_Are you hungry?_"

"_Are _**you**_ hungry?_"

"You know, it's disrespectful to talk back to a mother," she chuckles.

"_Sorry_, " I coo. After a moment's thought, I set down one of the bags that I'm carrying. "_But you might as well have these._"

Aki only looks at me blankly as I set the whole bag of spices in front of her. If I'm going to leave soon, I might as well do something good while I'm waiting.

"_You'll need it for trading,_" I explain.

* * *

><p>LN: Hah! Time for some change. As you can see, Nord's shall not be as drawn out as Halla's.**

Glossary:

Mutonj- ç„;é "ç•€- Mutonjaku- indifferent

Aki- ç§< - Autumn/Fall

Paxon- Pax + son ('Pax' being the name for 'Night Fury'.)

Akson- Aki + son.

Norteson- Norte + son (comes from ä¹-æ%< - Norite)

Hita- ç•«ä½"- hitai - 'fire body'

Clou- Spikes

****A****

"_Soâ€¦ are you sure this is going to work?_" Paxon asks nervously, shuddering at the thought of entering the city.

"Hey, I thought that Night Furies weren't afraid when it comes down to facing danger," I chuckle. "And this won't even be dangerous. The city won't reveal you that much."

"Hopefully," he croons, standing still as I fix the bags of spices to his back again. It looked pretty pointless for him to take them off in the first place, but if it made a point, then the point was made, and thus it isn't pointless.

"_Great,_" he mutters, grumbling as the bag bobbed awkwardly by his side. "_Now I look like a common mule carrying goods._"

"Which will make your journey significantly less attractive, because you look just like that."

"Good point," he murmurs. "I was never outgoing like Hiccup anyway."

We leave the dingy house in the Dump, carefully making sure to not let the Leader know. I take the back roads just to be sure. As we slowly walks away, I do not look back to that small little house that I had lived in for so many years of my life. Nothing in there will be of importance once I leave, and if things go awry, I always have a place to fall back just in case.

Which, as we trudge onwards slowly, makes me think of how I had to think of a place to fall back in the first place. For that to exist, I have to have a place that I'm heading forwards to, away from the place to fall back, and that is the city, and for that to be possible is to have Akson and his Norte helping me out.

Personally, I wonder if Sena had the same feelings when he found out that people were actually willing to help him- I can be sure that only a few days ago, I was mourning Sena's disappearance, because he snuck on the trading ships, and he never said goodbye. Which was proper at that time, because he never said anything to me, because I never said anything to him.

I'm a terrible mother.

"_No, you're not,_" I hear Paxon croon, and I nearly jump in surprise as we near Ken's house.

"What?" I ask, waving my hair backwards in an attempt to look modest. "You could hear me?"

"_Whispers can be quite loud to those with six ears,_" he jokes. "_Besidesâ€¦ your silence speaks for yourself. What else would you be thinking of?_"

"Um, like, Ken?" I ask irritably, motioning him towards us as we pass his house. His parents simply wave at us as we pass by, Ken quickly getting up from talking to them to reach us.

"I've been talking to my parents," he says excitedly. "They say it

would be nice to try and not work for the leader for once."

"What have you been telling them?" I ask worriedly, but he only gives me a smile.

"It's not like it's going to matter much," I hear Paxon mutter. "They'll be fine without Ken."

I look at Ken worriedly, knowing that he'd feel left out in all this conversation.

To my surprise, he gives Paxon a smile. And a few words.

"I guess so," Ken says in Dragonese, causing both of us to look at him in surprise.

"Where did you learn to speak _that?_" I ask in surprise, the roads getting steeper as we near the forest. Here, it connects to the main city, but the woods will prove to be slightly hindering to that.

"I think it was my parents," he says thoughtfully. "I've never really talked to a dragon before."

Knowing that it's not from his parents, who don't have an ounce of Dragonese in their tongues I can only guess that it was with him at birth. But that would mean that Ken's parentsâ€

"_Is there anything else I'm going to find new today?_" Paxon mutters. "_I demand you guys give me a warning beforehand._"

But it's funnyâ€ Sena can speak only the human version of Dragonese, but Ken and I speak perfect Dragoneseâ€

"How did you change him?" Ken asks Paxon, who conveniently moves aside to let me and Ken walk side-by-side as he sides the little boy, ears perked up in question.

"Change him?" Paxon asks, looking at Ken with curiosity. "Who?"

"Sena," he says. "How did you turn him into someone bursting with emotions? Before you and your friend, he hardly ever talked to anyone. Now he's willing to go _into_ the city- with _someone_ else, and _not_ to steal. And he was talking the whole way out of here, too. That's never happened before. Like, in the history of the Dump."

"You have to hand it to Hiccup," Paxon says with a croon. "He's pretty good in bringing out the good sides of people."

"Even you?" Ken asks, quite bluntly.

A small silence passes us. I fear this will break the air of conversation, but-

"_Even me,_" Toothless answers with a nod. "_I was quite intent on killing him before he showed me, like, everything._"

"That must be quiteâ€ remarkable," I put in, hoping to veer the conversation away from Paxon's friendship's origin. "To bring out the

good sidesâ€¦ of a _dragon._"

"_We're not amicable creatures,_" he admits with another nod.

I can tell that he's putting himself down, really. What kind of dragon _hasn't_ been amicable towards him, with that personality?

"Anyway," I continue, "Paxon says that we should go to the market to trade. You might have already figured this out, though."

It turns out, he hasn't.

"Really?!" he asks, jumping up and down in excitement. "I thought that we were just going for a walk! I never thought-"

"This road has been used exclusively by Sena during his hunting and stealing," I say irritably. "Why else would we be doing here?"

"_I dunno, trade maybe,_" Paxon jokes.

I cannot bring myself to sigh as he gives a really, really, sincere look. Like he's saying that, _this is meant to be a joke. Don't take it seriously._

So I laugh.

"In any case, we are nearing the city's outskirts," I say, the trees indeed getting thinner. "I suggest we stop using Dragonese, andâ€¦"

"_I know, I know,_" Paxon says with a sigh. "_I'll be the passenger mule that carries stuff and gets by unnoticed._"

I look at him worriedly, but he only perks up his ears in a very 'thumbs up'-ish kind of way. I don't see him with the sincere look, though.

****H****

"So, what are we doing here?" I ask, following Sena through the thinning crowd as we enter the less inhabited parts of the city. "Isn't there supposed to be a huge library here?"

"There _was_ a library here." Sena corrects, pointing to the huge ruins in front of us that seemed to have just burned down recently. Its black smolders and grey ashes make it almost impossible to extract anything of use from here. "I don't quite believe it, either."

"Was this thing still up when you left?" I ask curiously, picking out a few pieces of burnt paper and looking at them interestedly.

He nods. "I remember seeing it still up and ready when I was down by the ports."

"It can't have been a month that you were away from here."

"This place was always prejudiced against," Sena explains thoughtfully. "There would be huge riots here sometimes. I loved

those times best, because I could steal whatever I want when the guards were off fending the crowd. It's not even a library, now that I think of it."

"Why was this place all that hated?" I ask, walking around the pile of black soot curiously. "It looks like it was _just_ burned down, too."

"Some people are just conservative, I guess," he says, shaking his head in disgust. "Some believe that the books are telling lies. Some believe that they have black magic in those scrolls, and should be destroyed."

"Now we don't have a source of information," I say, morbidly thinking of the seemingly impossible. "What kind of sick people do that?"

"The kind that I just talked about," he says, kicking the soot resignedly. "But there's nothing here. Nor was there at the market, so that leaves only one more place."

"Where-" I begin to ask, but something really hard hits me from behind, and I lose consciousness.

****H****

"Ughâ€|" I mutter, rubbing my still aching head. "Whatâ€|whereâ€|"

I open my eyes groggily, getting up from my lying-down position that I assume to be the position that all people that are knocked out are in.

The scene in front of me, a cliff with a really great view of the sea, is not at all familiar to me.

Not too far from me, I hear the yells of "No, no, no, noâ€|!"

"Nnnâ€|" I groan, trying to process the information in my head. I was at the Library, I was knocked out, and-

"Sena!" I say suddenly, my senses going into overdrive as I get up instantly and look for him, only to find him my a tree, his arms punching at it with excessive force.

"H-Hiccup!" Sena says, turning around and jumping in fright. "D-don't-"

"What is it, Sena?" I ask, taking a step closer to him, to which he recoils, but crashes back into the tree. "Is something wrong? Where are we?"

As he tries to leave, I leap towards him and grip his hand tightly, causing him to cease his attempts to run.

"Hiccup, it was _me,_" I hear him say with a strained voice. "I knocked you out."

"You- what?!" I ask, widening my eyes in surprise. "But you were

just-

"Hiccup, listen," he says fretfully, looking at me with determined eyes. "You've been the first person who's ever reached out to me. Before you, I was called all sort of things related to not having emotions. Now I know what they mean."

"And what does that have to do with you knocking me out?" I ask, rubbing the back of my head, which still aches.

"It means that I didn't even know that the world could have people like you," he says. "It means that you're the person who made me who I am now."

"And?" I ask, raising an eyebrow.

"It means- it means- that I don't want you to leave!" he blurts out all very fast.

A long silence passes us as I slowly take in his motives. And believe me, I am not all that angry as I thought I would be. More like, I was sort of expecting something like this to come from Sena. Which still makes me somewhat angry, because I thought that he could get over it, but like I said, not as much as I thought.

"Sena-" is all I manage to reply, before he forcefully pulls me into hug, his head on my left shoulder as he trembles involuntarily.

"I mean, if you're gone, then who's going to hug me?" he asks, anger pouring out at every syllable, but strangely, he's only venting it out by his words. "Who's going to assure me that when I wake up, I will have someone who is caring like you? Who's going to be that bigger brother for me when I get into trouble? Who?"

"Sena!" I say, trying to pry him off me, but he stays where he is.

"I'm not leaving you!" he yells into my shoulder. "You're going to stay with me!"

"I can't," I say flatly, and Sena hugs me even tighter, almost constricting me of my airways.

"Who's going to comfort me when I'm sad?" he asks. "My mother, who has never as much as hugged me before now? Before you came in and changed my life?"

"Sena!" I say, trying to sound as angry as possible. "I'm not staying!"

True to my prediction, he shoves me into the tree, my back throbbing as well as my head. I get back slowly, walking towards him as he shoves me back again into the tree, this time with the added punch to the stomach. My meal threatens to come up, but I force myself to go through the pain at hand- and what will come later.

"Rrrngn!" he seethes, his teeth gnashing in anger, socking me in the shoulder this time as I once again stagger towards him and let him continually hit me. Every part of my body aches, every bone in my body is hurting, but still I let him hit me.

"C'mon, then," I say, trying to sound aggressive as I limp towards my little brother.

With all his remaining anger, he hits me straight in the torso, causing me to crash into the tree for the final time, where I slowly slump down to the ground, unable to get up any longer.

Sena looks at his hands, eyes widening as he realizes the magnitude of his actions.

"Hiccup!" he yells, running up to my groaning body, my arms unable to lift to stop him as he throws himself down at my side, tears in his eyes.

"I'm okay," I groan untruthfully. "I'mâ€¦ ugh, I think I might have broken something."

"Hiccup, just wait here, alright? I'll go get help," he says worriedly, but another groan from me causes him to turn back to me.

"This isâ€¦ what I'm doing," I say. "As a big brother."

"Wâ€¦ what do you mean?" he asks, afraid to doing anything else without thought.

"It meansâ€¦ that I did this for you."

"You meanâ€¦ you- you took all that? Just so I could vent?" he asks, looking at his hands with a terrified look.

"And I hurt," I groan unintentionally. "Everywhere."

"Hiccup, what are you trying to tell me?" he asks, guiltily fidgeting with his (old) tunic.

"I'm being a big brother for you," I grin weakly. "I'm teaching you how to grow up."

"Growâ€¦ up?" he asks.

"Yeah," I say. "There won't be someone to protect you forever, you know. You just gotta live with what's to come. You've never had a big brother before, and thus you've always had to defend for yourself. This is one of those times that you're going to get protection, Sena, but it's not going to last. You have to cope with it and move on."

"Nâ€¦ no," he says timidly, keeping a fair space between me and him out of fear for himself. As I try to beckon him in, he only stays where he is. "You've been the only person who's cared."

"How about your mother?" I ask, wishing that Sena would understand what life really is.

"Ma?" he asks. "Sheâ€¦ she doesn't like me, does she?"

"What makes you say that?"

"She's never, never, talked to me this seriously before. Maybe she's only kind to me in front of you."

The word Ma is hardly used in Dragonese at all, something that I found out fairly quickly because Toothless and Ken both address Aki as Akson.

I pause for a moment, watching as he ruffles the grass sadly, the wind once again blowing around, the birds singing their tunes, uncaring to the world around them.

"She isn't like that," I say at last, choosing my words carefully. "Even you know that."

"Iâ€¦ do?" he asks,

"You don't call her Ma without a reason, do you?"

Sena gives me a lengthy look, punctured by the glances at my chest as I continue to wince and groan in pain.

"You're hurt," he comments quietly at last.

"So are you."

He looks at his own hands in confusion. "But you didn't hit me," he says.

"You want me to stay, but I can't. That's why you're hurt."

Sena gets up, takes off his tunic, revealing the green undershirt that he wears underneath, and gives the leathery outer clothing to me.

"Hm?" I ask, tilting my head in question (and pain). Owâ€¦

"It'll help you, c'mon," he says, covering me with his tunic carefully. Sena's warmth in the clothes somewhat makes me feel better, it that's not all too weird.

"What are you- mrrph!" I say, struggling as I am suddenly lifted gently, propping up on my legs as I stagger painfully on the ground, trying to find a foothold to stand on the ground.

Just like Sena, who is trying to find a place to stand in this world.

"I hope this doesn't hurt you," he says worriedly. "I've done too much already."

"I-"

"Just shift your weight over to me," he insists, and I lean on his side. His tunic really does help, its extra layer making movement less difficult and joints less painful.

I feel Sena's shoulder wrap behind me, my hands finding his shoulder as well, the two of us limping our way along a path that Sena seems to know of.

"So, going off to find your Raijin?" I somehow manage to joke, which Sena doesn't falter in the slightest. He's more concerned on other things at the moment.

"Going off to get Niison the information he wants," he mutters, making sure to take small steps as my body aches with every move of the foot. "And maybe some rest, too."

"I-" I begin, ducking below a tree branch slowly. It looks like we're not far from the ruins of the library, only a few blocks to the right, if I could just keep my eyes focused. Right now, I'm wondering why Sena, who was all about making me stay, suddenly-

"You're wondering why I've changed my mind so quickly, right?" he asks, shifting to the left slowly as we head to the opposite direction.

I nod. Maybe Sena has gotten some of my inner flame as well.

"You could say that you knocked some sense into me," he explains. "Which really isn't the best thing to say at the moment-" I manage to let out a small snort. "When I saw you hurt like that, and when you said that you were doing this for me, I remembered everything you did for me. And I realized that I wasn't doing it for you at all. I was doing it for myself. And I've done too much for myself already. I've had enough of that."

"Soâ€|" I grunt, wincing as my prosthetic hits something hard, to which I quickly wave away to get the conversation moving. "What are you doing now?"

"I figured out that if the library was gone, then you should rest at Fuyuson's instead. There's a lot of books there, too."

"Fuyuson?" I ask, wondering if Toothless could translate that for me. He's not in range, unfortunately.

"My father," he answers with a slightly bitter tone. "He's what got me and Ma into all this mess."

"He's also what got you to meet me," I point out.

Sena turns his head towards me, which is incredibly awkward, seeing the distance between us as he supports me, but he faces me nonetheless.

"He's why I got to hurt and burden you, too," he says with a guilty tone, slowly leading us through an alleyway towards the larger houses, midway between the market and the Dump. "And I'm not happy of that."

"I find it to be quite privileging," I say with a weak chuckle, "To have a little brother like you."

He stops walking all the sudden, causing me to wince painfully at the abrupt stop.

"You do?" he asks in disbelief. "You really do?"

"That part too," I reply.

"What part?" he asks, not budging his legs in the slightest.

"Your innocence," I say. "To not see these things coming when they're so obvious."

I feel the slightest of a smirk on him as he turns away.

"Maybe it would be easier for you too, if you weren't so keen on forgiving me."

"What do you mean?" I ask, feeling stupid for being boggled.

"That your brother isn't innocent at all," he replies with a giggle. "I know a lot of things too."

"Not about brotherhood, you don't," I smirk.

"Hiccup, don't you get it?" he asks with disbelief. "Toothless is your brother. I'm not. That's why I'm always hurting you and not understanding simple things."

Sena presses on our walk at last, my movements slowing down even more as I think about his words. Toothless is definitely a friend, but a brotherâ€¦? Being a brother implies that you have to take care of your siblings, but Toothless didn't have to. He never needed to at all, but he does it all the time. And I'm grateful for that.

"Toothless isn't my brother," I conclude. "He's my friend. He's not even mine, unlike what the word would imply. He'sâ€¦ a really good friend."

"How aboutâ€¦ umâ€¦" Sena says nervously, rounding a corner to meet a row of houses, people sparse but things abundant. Everyone here must be off on the trading mission.

"You?" I ask with a chuckle. "You're like a little brother to me. I feel like I have to protect you-"

"-But you don't need to, not anymore-"

"Exactly. That's why you're my friend and not blood relatives. We do it, even if we don't need to. We do it because we want to."

"..." Sena is silent for several seconds, and he bursts into laughter, his cheery mood lightening my attitude (but also annoying me slightly).

"What?" I ask.

"We do it because we want to," he smirks mischievously. "We do it."

I stare at him for several seconds before I finally understand his words.

"You're not supposed to know that stuff!" I snap at him disapprovingly, watching as he laughs with mirth. Oh, well. At least

Sena is happy again.

"How much do you know?" he asks, grinning madly. "My. Innocent?"

"I was going to say that to you, Mr. Naughty," I mutter. "But it looks like you're not so innocent after all."

"Exactly," he says, mimicking my words.

I give him a glare, but quickly stop as Sena tilts his head curiously.

"So, how much do you know?" I ask cautiously, not wanting to tell him more than he does at the moment.

"It involves a man and a woman," he says, with a smirk. "And then they hold hands, and then they kiss."

"And then?" I ask, raising my eyebrows. Which turns out to be the worst mistake ever.

"There's more?" he asks, turning to face me with surprise.

I mentally facepalm myself a few thousand times.

"No-" I say quickly- too quickly, because Sena's not buying it.

"Ah-hah!" he says, jumping with giddy, causing me to (you guessed it) wince. "Oops. Sorry."

"Apologize to me by promising that you're not going to find stuff like that by yourself," I mutter. He isn't of age yetâ€¦ if he finds these things out before he gets themâ€¦

"Nope," he says with an evil grin. "Not gonna happen."

"I am going to tell your Raijin when I find out who she is-"

"Oh! There's the house!" he says, pointing towards the house at the end of the road.

"Give me a break," I mutter.

"You're gonna get one," he says, hitching me in an attempt to make me walk/limp faster. I don't. "C'mon."

The house, a tall structure with a reasonable amount of space inside, stands at the road's end, a patch of trees blocking it from another part of the city, which seems a lot more dingy. It looks like this place is where the rich people live. A lavish sign on the front door reads

Fuyu's House

Domus kon Fuyu

and there are several signs of development recently. Berk is pretty isolated, making us not really advanced, because with new people come

new ideas, but this place, with its port and its connection to the dragons, really have made this place into a ratherâ€¦ high place to live in.

It angers me to think that Sena's father has abandoned Sena and Aki, when he has all of this to keep them in. The house can fit, like, 4 people in comfortably, but with just one personâ€¦ he's mad.

"You'd think that he was less richer," he mutters, pushing at the front door, which stays shut due to a bolt.

"Okay, whatâ€¦"

He continues to hit it, but the bolt, which is inside, does not come loose. There are even windows that can be opened and shut from only the inside, and that's a bit problematic for us.

"You should let me sit somewhere first," I offer. "You can work better that way-"

"No," he says flatly. "I am not making me hurt you anymore."

"You're-"

"Get out of the way!" Sena says, jerking to the side suddenly and pulling me along as well. My arms grunt in pain, which Sena tries his best to not say anything.

A shockblast from somewhere melts the outside bolt clean from its hinge, allowing the door to swing open all of a sudden.

Well, that was easy, a dragon out of my sight says with a hint of a smirk. _You might need a new lock, though._

"Toothless!" I say, gripping onto Sena tightly as I get up. "Thanks, Sena.- ow..."

Hiccup! You're hurt! Toothless says frantically, jumping from my right, also known as the trees, landing cleanly in front of me and Sena, and all the while whimpering loudly as he sees me. Thank grace there's no blood at all- Toothless would hunt if he saw that.

"I'm _fine,_ Toothless," I say with a weak smile. Sena looks at me guiltily as Aki and, to my surprise, Ken, follows Toothless from the patch of trees.

"We thought that you'd be here," Aki says with worry. "You'd need a shelter before you traded."

"I did," Sena says quietly.

Instantly, everyone's heads, except my own, turns toward Sena.

"You did _what?_" Ken asks, not really believing what Sena said.

"I got angry and I hurt him," he says shortly, his head down in shame.

Heâ€¦ hurt you? Toothless growls, baring his fangs. _Hiccup, maybe

you should stay away from him--

"Everything's alright," I say loudly, diverting everyone's attention away from Sena. "Honestly. I'm not that hurt or anything."

Why did he get angry? Toothless asks, nudging me softly and avoiding Sena's gaze.

"_Heâ€| didn't want me to leave,_" I mentally tell him, deciding not to lie. Besides, he'd find out anyway. "_But everything's alright now,_" I add hastily as he growls. "_He's accepted the truth already._"

Toothless pulls back with a small look towards Sena.

"Um, gentlemen, the house," Aki says quickly, also sensing Toothless's distrust.

"Oh," I say.

We all turn towards the infrastructure, its lavish door hanging open from Toothless's blast.

"I guess we should get in before someone sees us," I declare, feeling the prosthetic as it clanks loudly on the ground. I turn towards Sena. "I think I can walk on my own now."

"You sure?" he asks. When I nod, he slings his arm off me, and I do the same. I wince slightly as my weight shifts back to both of my legs abruptly, but I manage to walk normally, albeit much slower.

"Let's go, then," Aki says, leading us as she enters the house.

****S****

As Ma, Hiccup, and Ken enter the house one by one, Toothless finally follows then, brushing right past me without any look.

It pains me to see him ignore me like this. It really does. He might not have been all that close with me, but he let me on his back, he saved my life, and he's always been watching my back along with Hiccup's. If he doesn't trust me anymoreâ€|

"Toothless," I call nervously. When he doesn't respond, I try his name in Dragonese.

"_Noxon._"

He turns around, very slowly, his eyes slit but not aggressive.

"Toothless, I know what I did was wrong," I say. "I thought Hiccup could stay with me. He always has ever since you two found me."

Toothless snorts in a condescending way. I hear him mutter "_Stupid boy_" in Dragonese.

I wonder if he intentionally let me hear that.

"But I know now," I continue, "That he's not going to stay. And I accept that."

Toothless rolls his eyes and makes to turn away. Really, the hurt that you get when someone you desperately not want to be distant with acts all distant is something that cuts painfully.

"I know it because he cares about you very much," I quickly say.

Toothless turns back towards me, his eyes and ears alert in curiosity. He almost looks _cute_ when he does that.

"Hiccup cares about you more than anything in the world," I say. "And he's willing to go with you to the Northlands, through wars and dangers, just to do something for you. He's got so many reasons to stay back at Berk, but he decides to be with you, just for you."

Toothless now fully has his attention on me. He lets out a small croon.

"I thought I could make him care about me like he cared about you. I thought that if I was close enough, like brothers, he might have cared about me enough to do something I wanted for me. But it turns out, we're not brothers."

Toothless nods, his eyes wide.

"We're friends, and friends have to move on from each other one day. You two are like brothers. You'll never leave each other, not for the world."

Toothless nods again.

"You're like brothers, but you're not brothers, because you don't share the same blood. But you're as close as one. You two feel the need to care for each other despite not needing to at all."

Toothless croons in agreement.

"Soâ€¦ will you forgive me?" I ask nervously, my legs fidgeting before the mighty dragon. "I've understood my mistake and I'm not going to make it again. Peace?"

Toothless moves in, his eyes closed in acceptance as he stays put, his head down and ears back to normal. I move my hand to touch his snout, and I feel a small zap of rushing emotions as I do so, but it's gone as soon as he pulls away.

He croons, nudging me gently as I push him away. He nods towards the house and waits for me to walk.

"Um, Toothless? Can I ask you another question?" I ask, knowing fully well that he can't answer it. Or at least let me know. "How are _those_ stuff done?"

Toothless looks at me in question, then immediately looks at the door with mirth. After a while, Hiccup steps out of the door and glares at Toothless.

"I'm not going to tell him how that's done," he says irritably.
"You tell him."

Toothless turns back towards me.

"Sorry," he croons, nudging me towards the door.

"I should be saying that," I laugh as I head for the door. Toothless snorts.

****T****

That Sena really is something. How many people will go so far to accomplish so little? I'm going to leave anyway, but yet he tries his best to make sure that I'm not mad at him. To be honest, I was- but it was that kind of angry, the
you-hurt-my-friend-you-but-he-says-it's-alright-but-I'm-mad-anyway
kind of mad. I would get over it, but yet he tries to clear it up right away.

Sena enters the house. As he passes the front door, he turns around and gives me a smile.

I croon and follow him. Hmph. Little boyâ€¦

The house is full of elaborate objects, each of them put in different positions of the house, not really showing any meaning in them. There are some on walls, there are some on the floor, but they all look like decorations, meaningless except for its own existence.

"Soâ€¦ Fuyuson lives in a place like this," Sena mutters. "Not that I'd expect less."

There are no rooms in the house, but instead everything is put in a the spacy area like ships in a dock. (Dock? That word sounds weird.) The first floor has a table, several chairs, a bench, a fire, and a load of unnecessary stuff that are worth much more when sold than put up for show.

"These things aren't found in the marketâ€¦" Hiccup observes a golden flower holder- "Vase, Toothless," - on top of a small round table. Why is it here?

"Must be items from trade," Aki says. "Either that or he's illegally bringing stuff in."

"That would be quite a scandal," Ken says. "As if stealing-"

Aki silences him with a really sharp look.

"There's nothing here at all," Sena says, which is pretty inaccurate, because there are a lot of stuff here. They're just not of interest.

"There isn't a lot," Aki agrees, and for a moment they exchange a few glances, each of them showing the want for understanding and care.

"C'mon, let's try upstairs."

Aki heads upstairs, Sena following closely behind her. Once again she glances down at her son, but none of them say anything.

So, are you okay? I ask Hiccup, following Ken up the stairs.

"_I guess I am- ow,_ " he says, rubbing his arm. "_Just a few bruises, that's it._"

Lean on me, I offer, the grand staircase wide enough to fit us both side-by-side.

"I'll pass," Mikata says out loud, continuing his pace upstairs with me.

What's wrong? I ask, whimpering quietly as I take a closer look at his body. _
>

"_I'm trying to act like a more independent person_, " he says. "_And maybe it'll make me stronger._"

I stare at him for several seconds, then grab him by the scruff as I hoist him up the stairs.

"Oi- Toothless!" he yelps, flailing as he is lifted off the ground.

_Be independent later, _I coo. _We need to get you rested first._

"We?" he asks. He then looks up and sees Sena waiting for him. Mostly, if that doesn't sound too arrogant.

"Guess what I found," Sena says eagerly, holding up a book for him to see.

"What, a pest control book?" he mutters, glancing very directly at me.

"That's an insult, right?" I croon.

"Yes," Sena answers, and Hiccup laughs. I narrow my eyes at both, and 'accidentally' drop Hiccup down onto the floor, his legs shaking but managing to stay upright.

"Just kidding. It's a book that explains the various dragons and islands in the Northlands!" he says excitedly. "You should have it."

"Awesome, Sena," he says, giving him a thumbs-up. Sena gives a thumbs-up back, and smiles at me.

"There are a few Dragonese phrases here," Ken points out, "But it's all human Dragonese."

"_That'll do_, " I say, nodding towards the book. "_Do you think the Isle of Night is in there?_"

"_The isle of what?_" Ken asks. Hiccup turns between the two of us in confusion, much to my amusement.

"You two can speak Dragonese?" Sena asks, ruffling his hair in inquiry. "Weird."

"Indeed," Hiccup agrees.

Not as weird as you not being able to speak it, I say, rolling my eyes. It's pretty funny when you get something from someone, you're entitled to do something with it in front of them to show your interest. For Hiccup, though, he only skims through it, and Sena doesn't seem to mind at all.

"Sena," Akson calls from the far side of the room. "Look at this!"

"Huh?"

Sena and Ken dashes towards Akson, who is standing in front of a wall decorated with a huge painting of a tree.

"That's not a tree," Hiccup tells me when I ask him. "It's a family tree."

"Every family has one," Akson explains as we approach her. "It even updates itself, I think."

_A _self updating_ **_family_** _tree?_ I ask him, cooing softly as we too head towards it. Well, the 'tree'.

Admittedly, it has a lot of names on it. But the names are connected to each other by branches, and some of them even have pictures on them.

At the top, a lone name reading _Catus Inumbro_ branches down to four more, and they all branch down as well, some of them extending to the side as well.

"That was before the dragons, I guess," Hiccup says, running my eyes down the tree. "The names are so weird."

"That's "

As I scan down the names, I finally skim down to where the Dragonese names are. It looks like ever since us dragons got involved with the humans, they've been using our language for names instead of their own.

"So humans have been here before dragonsâ€|?" Hiccup asks, but I nudge to the bottom of the tree, which is a reasonable distance away from the ground, 22 lines away from the top.

Nazo In - father of

Tanno In and _Sak Ao_ - father and mother of

Fuyu In and _Aki Rue _- father and mother of

Sena In

"There's a covered up part here..." Aki says, pulling away a piece of parchment stuck beside Sena's name.

-half siblings with

Kanke In

"Half siblings?" I ask out loud.

"With who?" Sena asks.

"Me," Ken says in almost a whisper.

"_Ken?!_" Everyone in the room, save for himself, say at once, all turning towards him.

"That's my real name, but everyone calls me Ken," he shrugs. "So it stuck."

"We're _half_-siblings?!" Sena yells in surprise, looking at me in question. "What's a _half sibling?_"

"Hold onâ€|" Hiccup says, looking at the line tracing. A small, dotted line drags upwards to

Fuyu In and _Dokmai Raii._

"You meanâ€|" Aki says with a gasp. "Heâ€|"

"He had another wife," Hiccup says with a hint of disgust. Sena turns to fact Akson with wide eyes.

"_A child from another father,_" I say quietly.

"She's-" Sena begins with disbelief.

"No, she's not from around here," she mutters. "Must have been one of those trade missions."

"Then the people at the Dumpâ€| weren't my parents?" Ken asks, not believing the truth. He turns to Sena. "And you're my brother?"

"Yes and yes," Akson says, not quite ready to believe it herself. "Which makes us legitimate owners for this house."

"What?" everyone asks at the same time.

"Hey, I'm related to Fuyu as a wife, and Sena's my son, and Ken's my half-son. So technically, this house is Sena's by heritage."

"Am I?" Sena asks in shock. "But- Ma-"

"Yes, you are, Sena," Akson says, pulling him into a hug. "And we have a new house."

****H****

As they talk, the sun slowly sets down, the flares giving up the last of its adherent rays into the sky as it begins to wave goodbye to the

world. Eventually, we end up having dinner with them, Sena having discovered a bread storage at the back of the house.

"Not as good as Halla's," Sena remarks as he chomps down his food hungrily. "But tasty."

"Still better than our average meal at the dump," Ken says, and the two of them laugh.

"Huh," Aki says with a hint of a smile. "You two aren't grateful for your food at all."

"I am!" Sena says indignantly through a mouthful of bread and fish.

"Manners, Sena," Aki says, but she's smiling.

"Maaaa," Sena whines. "But we just got here! And no one's here anyway."

I look at Toothless with a grin. He grins right back, a piece of bread in his mouth.

Mmâ€| sooo sweetâ€| he says, licking his teeth happily. _Powerfully fragrant taste._

I roll my eyes and turn my attention back to the table.

"We have so much stuff to sell," Aki says.

"You mean the spices?" I ask, scratching my head in confusion.

"I think she means those," Sena says, nodding towards the elaborate decorations around the house.

"Oh," I say.

"Won't Fuyuson get mad?" Ken asks. "That's like stealing-"

"We're owners of the house now," Sena says. "And we're not going to sell _that _much. Just enough so we have food to eat. And I can still hunt."

"Though I won't mind," Aki admits. "After all he's given us, I doubt he'd care."

"It doesn't really bother me," Sena says. "For all I'm concerned, I don't have a father."

Aki looks at him with a torn look.

"Me too," Ken quickly puts in. After a small dilemma, she smiles.

"Hiccup, do you mind if you stay one more night?" Aki asks, looking at me with an expecting look.

"Ma, he doesn't-" Sena begins.

"No, it's alright," I say. "It's only one night, and we're sticking

to the plan. It's not like we're staying here too long or anything."

"Oh, we wouldn't mind if you stayed longer," Sena says with a grin. "And you're also welcome to stay whenever you end up here."

"Gee, thanks," I say, nodding appreciatively. More friends, more stability.

****H****

As we finish the last of the food, Toothless yawns lazily and sleeps on the mattress near the back of the house. The rest of the party heads upstairs to go to bed, the sleeping quarters turning out to be huge.

"Time to put out the lights," I say, blowing out a candle and laying down on Toothless's back. "G'night, bud."

"G'night, Niison," a voice in the dark says.

"Sena?" I ask, watching as he appears in front of me, illuminated by the moonlight.

"Yeah," he says, his eyes glinting in the starlight. "I'm just going to tell you thatâ€¦ uhâ€¦"

"Uh?" I ask, mimicking his words. "That's a weird thing to tell me."

"No, not that," he mutters. "I meanâ€¦ I feel happy. Not because you're going away, but because I know everything's great now. Is that a strange feeling?"

"Not at all," I reply.

"Great. Andâ€¦ remember what you said about being a brother and everything?"

"Yeah?" I ask, remembering Ken and Sena and their now discovered brotherhood.

"Is being a big brother hard?"

I raise my eyebrows in the dark, knowing that he probably won't see it anyway.

"Not really," I smile. "I mean, you're fun and jovial most of the time, so you can tolerate anything Ken does."

Sena smiles.

"I feel like I need to protect Ken," he says nervously. "Like, I'm worried that he'll get hurt. Is that a Big Brother feeling?"

"That's a Good Person feeling," I say. "But are you annoyed by his antics sometimes?"

"Um, yes," he admits. "But I smile, knowing that he's happy."

"That's a Big Brother feeling," I say with a laugh. "Like when you prank me."

"I'll miss that feeling," Sena says with a small sigh. "Annoying an older brother."

"I'll miss teaching you how to write, too," I say. "You've gotten most of the letters already, right?"

Sena nods.

"Here." I hand him a piece of Minox, carved with the letters of the Norse Alphabet, along with the name Hiccup at the bottom.

"What's this?" he asks, studying the metal carefully.

"A souvenir," I say. From your "Niison."

"Hiccup!" he says, looking at me with a small smile.
"Thanks."

"Aki can teach you the rest. Right now, you need to sleep. You're going to be a trader tomorrow."

Sena nods again, his eyes blinking once, then twice, then finally closes his eyes.

"G'night, Hiccup."

"G'night, Sena."

He opens his eyes, turns around, and disappears upstairs and into the dark of the night.

****H****

Morning comes too fast sometimes. You know you have to leave, but there's like this string that holds you back, trying to make you stay. These strings are connected to Sena, Aki, and Ken, all in that order, but when a stronger force acts upon a weaker one, movement always goes according to the stronger force.

This doesn't mean that these strings are holding me back. They're holding me together. But I already have an infallible bond with a dragon, and with him is where I am myself the most.

Of course, I'll be with him for years and years to come. If I leave here, I may never see Sena again. I probably won't, seeing that I'm going to the extreme norths.

When I wake up, I try to shove these thoughts out of my head. I can't be thinking of things like these.

I open my eyes quickly, getting up and unfastening the iron-holding sacks that Toothless holds quickly, trying to not let any more thoughts get to me. I can't abandon my main mission, my point of living, now. I only bring small amounts of food and an extra sack to hold items- like Sena's book.

Toothless opens his eyes lazily, warbling quietly as I set the sacks down. I can't take these things with me; this is most I can give them now. I can't give them any more than this. Upstairs, I hear the faint snore of someone who I can only pray to be the members of the In family.

"C'mon, Toothless," I say, urging him up quickly. "We're going."

No last minute goodbyes? he asks with a yawn.

"No," I say, writing a small letter and leaving it on the table. In a corner of the room, I see Sena's tunics aligned perfectly on the wall. Aki must have put them there. "Let's go."

I stride out of the house quietly, letting the door open for itself as the wind swings it open. Lavish things break easily.

As soon as I'm out of the house, I turn around one last time, looking at the house and hoping their inhabitants won't be mad at me.

It doesn't matter. Sena won't.

"Going somewhere?"

I whip around to see Sena, perched on a tree branch, smiling at me.

"I'm leaving," I say determinedly, watching as he climbs down from the tree and run up to me. Toothless gives him a lick, which forces me to close my eyes.

I'm not staying, I tell myself. _I'm not._

"You should stay for breakfast," Sena says with a grin. "We're having bread today."

"It's alright, Sena," I tell him. "It's about time for me to leave, anyway."

"Ma is already at the market," Sena says. "I stayed behind because I knew that you'd try to get the jump."

"She is?" I ask.

"Sort of," a voice behind me says. "Business is going quite well, you know. Those vases cost a load of money."

"Aki!" I say, turning around to see her holding a gold coin, shiny and glinting in the early sunlight.

"Take this," she says with a smile. "Though I daresay I'll have to find a house to repay you someday too."

"I didn't do anything," I say. "This house was already waiting for you to be claimed."

"Oh, but I needed Sena's presence for the house to be mine," she says, holding up a small, metal seal. "And you as good as give me that."

"I can'tâ€¦" I begin, but Toothless nudges me, and I take the coin with gratitude.

"This has the seal of Nord on it," she explains. "The dragons will know you're friendly. Well, some of them."

"Thanks, Aki," I say. Toothless croons.

"Anytime," she says. Toothless says something to her in Dragonese and they engage in small talk. I turn around to see Sena with a smile.

"Time for my gifts," he says. He produces a bow, a quiver and arrows, and a sword, all of them with the Dragonese letter **S** on it, and the crest of Nord on them as well.

"If you don't miss me, you can think of the S as Southlands," he says with a grin as I take the weapons. "You know, the place you were from."

I think of Berk, Nord, and inadvertently their residents. Snotlout, Fishlegs, Astrid, the twins, even my father, who has turned on me. I see Sena's smile, Aki's talk with Toothless, and I try not to think of anything else at the moment.

I want to remember these people. That S will mean far more than just a letter.

"But if you must go now," Aki says, "Then we will see you off."

"Yeah," Sena says. "We're not going to let you go without us annoying you first."

"Totally," Ken says, appearing by the door.

I hitch onto Toothless and watch them assemble together; mother and son, mended of bonds by understanding. Brother and brother, brought together by facts and age.

"...Thanks, everyone," I say with a smile. "You guys mean a lot."

"Visit sometime, alright?" Aki says with a smile. "You're always welcome."

"I might even teach you how to find girls," Sena jokes, nodding to something behind me.

Far off, in the distance, a girl with red hair, next to a stall with vases and paintings, waves happily at Sena. I turn around to see him blushing slightly, but not enough for Aki and Ken to notice.

I smile.

"I wish you guys the best of luck," Aki says. "May the gods be with you."

"Don't worry," I say, rubbing Toothless happily. "I'm already with one."

I'll take that as an insult, thanks, Toothless jokes.

As he spreads his wings, I give Sena a last wave.

"Bye, Niison," he says, waving back.

"Bye, Hiccup," Aki and Ken say, waving as well.

Just before I lift off into the air, I wave at them both too, but my eyes do not leave Sena, and his eyes do not leave mine.

"Bye, everyone," I say. Toothless lifts into the sky, lets out a roar of farewell, and flies towards the lands of the unknown. As we shoot through the air, I catch a glimpse of the stall, with spices and pottery, and Aki quickly returning to it to deal with the crowds of people now assembling in front of it. Sena quickly follows, the girl smiling happily as they meet.

But when I turn away, I don't look back.

****H****

The world is large, the lands are lonely without one another, and even when with others there be conflict and wars. There are new places waiting to be discovered, and places that have already been are brought down to us so we can too search for them. But often those searches fail, and they become even juicier targets for daring people to find. They say that the traveller is the happiest before a journey, because it's the thought and thrill that counts.

Next target: Isle of Night, Toothless says with a grin.

But who knows. With Toothless, even minute of the journey counts.

* * *

><p>LN: Hiccup and Toothless are once again alone! Which should make you guys happy. This concludes Searching for Lightning: Midlands, so the rest will be all Northland- based.

****Glossary:****

****_Domus kon Fuyu - _House of Fuyu. Now in Dragonese!****

****_Catus Inumbro - _The last name, Inumbro, means shade. Its Dragonese equivalent is In. Everything below is Japanese unless said otherwise.****

****_Nazo - _Mystery****

****_Tanno _and _Sak Ao_ - Proficient and Bloom, Blue.****

****_Fuyu _and _Aki Rue _- Winter and Autumn, Dragon.****

****_Sena _- In case you forgot, means "New world".****

****_Kanke -_ Kankei, meaning Relevant****

****__Dokmai Raii - __Flower (Thai) and Rai, Arrive (Japanese; or at least its Kanji reading).****

16. Red

"Hey, Hiccup, wanna walk home together?" Fishlegs asked me, holding a silver piece of metal and studying it carefully.

"Um, why?" I asked, not so really sure of why he would offer that. After all, he's always been quiet around me. He's never been a big part of the group, sure, but neither have I. But even if he's ridiculed and even neglected sometimes, he always seems to find a way to get along. Unlike me, who's never been part of the group. I just wander around aimlessly, wondering why I actually wander around aimlessly in the first place.

"I dunno. Are you coming?" he asked, tilting his head towards the front of the arena, where the others were.

I honestly had zero idea. So my head really got going when Fishlegs invited me to walk home with the rest of the group.

Maybe they finally acknowledge me as one of them, I thought to myself. Maybe they finally saw some good in me. Maybe I'm not the useless Useless after all.

"Alright, give me a second," I said, packing up my stuff (a shield and a small dagger). I don't think I'll ever be able to harm anything with the latter, though. It's not because the silver is shiny and fashionable, but because the idea of hurting something itself really reminds me of myself and how I hurt every day, and don't know why. It makes me think, and it makes me hurt, and it makes me think if this knife had found its way into an animal's flesh, they wouldn't know what hurt them, especially if the animal was a yak or a dragon, because those have a lot of blind spots.

I made my way towards the arena door, where Astrid and Fishlegs and the rest of the gang were already there. Fishlegs must have asked them to wait, because they never do. It's not even like waiting. It's likeâ€| nah. They just never wait.

I had always wondered why I was never part of the group; I could tolerate being with others, because we're all supposed to like that, but I've never really understood the way people talked to each other all the time. I mean, how they manage to not have any awkward pauses that make you feel uncomfortable. And how they never mention it, even if it's something that should be. Just like right now, when I feel awkward thinking about this because I don't know what else to think of.

It's crazy, but it's kept me up a lot of nights. I've always wondered, and I still wonder now.

Maybe it's never going to matter, actually, if I really do get accepted into the group.

And I asked myself: What was it that I did, if they really want me into the group? It surely wasn't my exceptional dragon training abilities (I had none), nor my sociability (the only creature that

acknowledges my existence is a murderous Night Fury).

I caught up with them just as they were about to leave. Fishlegs nodded, and we exchanged a few words. To be honest, I didn't want to look all giddy and excited that I was in their group for once, but it was pretty hard to hide. I kept talking to Astrid and Fishlegs and even Snotlout, and finally, for once, I guess I knew why they kept talking all the time. Because there was so much to talk about.

But, as the walking dragged on, I felt it more and more tiring to talk. Especially since the only thing I was getting was grunts of approval as they talked about their own stuff. Feats of strength, what dragon they'd like to hunt down (I smiled, knowing that I already got one. He even touched my hand!), what they'd like this Snoggletog. I had no idea why they talked about such trivial things, but they did, and they seemed to like it. It sounded all like baloney and bread, without the bread.

Eventually, I fell silent. No one seemed to bother, and frankly, they looked relieved of something.

Hopefully it's not because of me.

I walked behind the rest of the group quietly, listening as they talked about what they wanted. Even Fishlegs was boasting about his profound knowledge of shot limits to Tuffnut, who seemed to be listening with interest.

Fishlegs never turned around to check on me once.

I know, I thought to myself, I wasn't worth turning around for, no one cared about me, but then why was I in the group? Why did Fishlegs invite me, then? What was that all about?

I wanted to know why, but I didn't want to talk. I wanted to see if they actually cared.

I stopped walking. I stood still, waiting for them to turn around and notice that I was missing.

Snotlout, Astrid, Fishlegs, Tuffnut, and Ruffnut all kept on walking, talking in their normalities. They didn't even seem to notice I wasn't walking with them. It was as if I didn't even exist.

I turned on my heel and headed straight for the woods.

I was angry. I was mad at Fishlegs and his delusional plan to lure me into a false sense of security. I never thought once that he'd betray me.

And I realized that he never cared. I realized that I had brought all of this down upon myself.

I wonder if anyone cared about me.

I raced through the woods aimlessly, not really knowing where I'd end up. I knew for a fact that I would be a lot worse off at home, because I'd have to put up with my father, and I knew that running made me feel better- even if it exhausted my legs and lungs, which were, as they'd say, useless anyway.

No one cared about me, really. I was stupid for even thinking about it. I was never good enough to be part of their group. I was always the one left behind. Even though I like to read, like Fishlegs, I seem to have no abilities in talking with other people- they just always find me boring and shove me away.

No one cared.

I kept on running, and I nearly slipped and fell. I steadied myself and saw that I was at the Cove. Raven's Point, Cove, the Hole, it was all the same thing to me. It was just another geographical place, a lowered part of the land that-

-well, um, had a dragon that I shot down within.

I treaded around the cove slowly, thinking of what I should do. I know I should go talk to him (definitely a him, he's stubborn) or something, to make up for what I've done, butâ€¦ I'm scared. I don't know what he'll do, especially if he figures out the horrible truth.

I'll become a really good friend and annoy you the whole day, the dragon below me warbles, warbling happily as we soar through the clouds, high above the ground.

"Toothless!" I sigh, rolling my eyes at the dragon, my thoughts snapping out of my, well, head. "I was in a daydream!"

More like your memories, he snorts. _Were you seriously scared of me back then?_

"Given your massive demographics, I still sort of am," I mumble.

Mmph. Sorry, he mutters.

"Sorry? For having a body large enough for me to perch atop on?" I joke, rubbing his head gently. When we head out from our journeys, we are filled with an inspiration to burst forward, to explore the unknown, to fulfil what we want. When we see other people depart for an adventure, we believe that they will continue their travels with eagerness, with the dream that they will succeed in their needs.

Anyway, ever since I've left Nord, I've been half-sleeping from the cold air that surrounds me. It's forced me to hug Toothless tightly, something that's probably been irritating Toothless ever since we left the village of Nord. To be honest, I _was_ filled with an evangelical zeal and thrill of entering the unknown lands of dragons where humans could not live in, but after not seeing any dragons (except for the guy below me) for a while, I sort of got sleepy and fell asleep. Only to be plagued with the old memories of Berk and the missing absence of a Nordan brother on my back.

It's been half a day already, and though I feel refreshed, I'm not all that wary of hostile dragons, either, despite having been warned that the Northlands were full of them. Though I guess the dragon I'm on is pretty hostile as well- if you don't hug him a lot.

I wish I had a smaller body, he mumbles. _It's sort of hard to cuddle you when you're twice as big as-_

"Shut up," I say. "You're a dragon, Toothless. Do you want to be smaller than you already are?"

He emits a small growl.

Is that an insult?

"Well, considering the Terrible Terrors-" I begin-

I'm forcefully pushing to the left as Toothless tilts himself perpendicular with the upcoming breeze. Being a Night Fury, he can navigate these powerful gusts easily, but the human sitting on top of him is not so fortunate to avoid the blasts of wind that hit his sides.

"Oi!" I say, my body absolutely /freezing with the chilling wind. "I get the message!"

What message? he asks with a smirk. I can feel that he's enjoying annoying me.

"That you're not a Terror!" I almost yell as my body jerks in alarm. "Just get back on course!"

What course? he grins, shifting his wings to let even more wind hit me. I've always loved the cold, you know, because it symbolized freedom in the face of painful memories. I really love it when Toothless and I soar the skies, and the winds hit my body until I'm numb and free.

But, of course, over euphoria exists, and it's also pretty cold.

"Toothless, I'm serious," I almost plead, not daring to move my hands from myself in fear of slipping off entirely. "Just-"

Almost instantly, his giant wings gust to the side, swiftly bringing the two of us to the side. A shotblast explodes in midair, warming the two of us (me, mostly) almost instantly.

That was convincing, he comments with a croon.

"Yes, after freezing me half to death," I mutter, hugging myself despite the fire Toothless gave me.

Sorry, he mumbles. _Got carried away._

"If I had another layer of clothes," I mutter, hugging Toothless's body tightly and remembering the old tunics that I left on Nord, "I would be remotely happy to do that stunt."

You have a scaly body to lean on, Toothless croons.

"A really, really, _big_ body," I remind him.

Toothless's ears droop, and I can't help but smirk, something that he probably notices.

Whatever, he grumbles, sulking as we fly onwards.

****T****

The flight commences in silence. It's like when you're on a long road journey, and you've run out of things to say (or, at least, the mood to say anything). My ears pick up sounds as we pass the the endless sea, the scenery marred/beautified by the random rock pillars that appear here and there, none of them really preferable, especially with the very summerish winds that are _supposed_ to feel warm- they don't. Up in higher land, nothing is warm, and everything is cold.

Well, accordingly, everything down south should be nothing but warm, then, which is not exactly true, given my rather, uh, cold relationship with Stormfly. Well, um, sort of cold. Cold as in there was no distance at all. As in, um, nothing really actually happened between us.

Insert grumbling sounds.

But with Hiccup, everything's been warm and nice. Not romance hot, which sounds horribly inappropriate, and not alienated cold, like Stormfly. Just warm friendship.

"Let's find a place to sort out to stay first," I hear someone above me say. "We need to have lunch."

_You need to _get_ lunch,_ I warble. _I have powerful digestive abilities that allow me to annoy you and make you get food for me._

"Yeah, I know," he mutters, a loud growling of the human stomach agreeing. "Lazy dragon."

Why, thank you, I grin.

"How you even do that I don't even want to know," Hiccup says, scratching his head in exasperation.

I don't know either. Well, sort of. Dragons can't grin, on account of how our snouts are near fixated, but I've been copying the way Hiccup feels when he grins and I've been trying to mentally 'grin', too. Our connection is like a river that cuts through the land, circling the area in a ring, isolating a piece of land away from the others. Whenever one of us feels something, a mental representation appears in his mind, and into the river where both of our emotions collide. If he's happy, his happiness makes the river clearer, as if he had put some kind of essence down there that slowly diluted the whole water, making me happy as well. When he's sad, the river darkens, and it makes me feel down as well.

I've never thought of a name for it, but Immortality Bond would be a nice name. Technically, he is going to live for as long as me, but that doesn't mean that he won't mature mentally. His recent adventures have forced him to make more decisions on his own, and his strength has gotten stronger along the way, too.

He even has weapons, now! Bow and arrow, sword and spirit. And, to an

emotional scale, friend(s). But, as I'd like to strongly emphasize, no girlfriend-

"Astrid-

Nope, I croon happily. _Doesn't count. Not hot enough._

"Pfffft."

We find ourselves settling on the first island we find, mainly because it's the only island that I can see in the vicinity, and I don't trust my senses when it comes to hoping for another island. Hiccup wastes no time in endorsing himself into the wonderful book of the Northlands, sitting with a dragon behind his back.

Come to think of it, Northlands is a terrible name, because there is no clear boundary to _where_ the Northlands are. Berk is theoretically in the Southlands ('theoretically' because Berk describes itself 'being in the middle of nowhere', and doesn't know that the Northlands exist) whereas Nord describes itself as being in the 'Northlands', even though its vicinity is technically supposed to be in the Midlands (which, in turn, is also ambiguous, because the Midlands doesn't really exist if Nord is in the Northlands). Which, in a confusing conclusion, means that Berk is in the Southlands, Nord is high up north, and the Northlands is up higher.

That's just about as much as I could gather, anyway. Humans make my head spin.

"So do female dragons," Hiccup says. "Especially-

I growl.

"Um, nothing," he says hastily.

Go back to your books.

"Um, okay."

I croon, blasting a shot of fire into the water and warbling as several fish fly out of the liquid body of water into another body of matter, the air, and then into another body of matter, my mouth. Yum!

I've always wondered why fish tastes so good to dragons. I'm pretty sure it's because our distant relatives (snakes, turtles, lizards) also enjoy meat, but they're not big enough to eat fish. Is it because of our massive size that we actually like fish? Maybe that would explain why humans like tiny things. Because they're tiny.

Still, it makes me wonder why we enjoy eating cows as well.

"According to this book," Hiccup begins out of nowhere, "We're officially in the Northlands."

What? I ask, warbling as I snacker up the rest of the fallen fish. Excellent dinner! 5/5 would eat again. Plus one for the

spices.

"We're in the Changewing territory," he says. "If I'm not wrong, that's probably why we haven't seen any dragons yet. They're all camouflaged-"

I block his path instantly as several Changewings surround us, the furious dragons appearing out of the landscape, trees, rocks, even the very ground, all of them hissing and spitting out various amounts of aggression at the two of us. I use my wings to shield Hiccup, but since there are so many of them, I have no idea where to cover him.

It's the Night Fury and human that the Rock Scouts told us about! one of them hisses.

As Hiccup looks at me confusedly, I translate the words for him, to which he grimly smiles.

"Well, I take back my words earlier."

I groan.

How the hell do you still put up an attitude like that?! I moan, wondering if I could facesnout myself or something.

I seriously consider giving him up to the Changewings. Well, if they were more friendly, I would. They're watching them warily as they circle us, each of them (about twenty in total) all trying to get a good look at us- and blocking access to, like, anywhere except from where we're standing.

"Sorry," he mumbles.

My eyes slit in aggression. I snarl profanities, and am pretty pleased to see some of them cower in fright. The rest of them, though, snarl right back at me.

What are you doing here? One of the Changewings ask, his bold form implying his leadership.

Oh, sightseeing, I snarl back, my eyes eyeing him with distrust.

Hiccup's eyes dart frantically for a means of escape. I see his hands reach for the bow, and I kick him gently to stop him from doing anything crazy.

Keep a low profile, I tell him. _Don't make them try and go for you._

Not that I'd let them try. My mind boils, just by thinking that someone would try to hurt Hiccup, fuelling my already present distrust and aggression.

Are you a spy from the Nadders? the same Changewing hisses, while the others give me vindictive looks.

Do I look like a Nadder to you? I mutter, rolling my eyes. I absentmindedly hope that Hiccup has the sense to not try and make

peace with them.

The Changewing slits his eyes.

Other tribes may revere you tribe, _Night Fury,_ he hisses, _But we Changewings are not the stupid kind to believe that all Night Furies are neutral in this War. We've seen plenty of them snooping around and trying to gather information for their own._

My heart jumps at the word 'Night Fury'. So there are more of us.

We're not like them, I growl, trying to push the conversation away from my tribe. There's no way they're going to insult one of the most powerful dragons in the world, and especially his tribe. _We've come from the Southlands._

It's true, one of them hisses. _The scouts on the rocks saw them come from the South. They were carrying a human-_ he nods towards Hiccup, to which I snarl defensively, _that boy- with him._

And what is that scum supposed to mean? the lead Changewing hisses, turning his oversized head to the side as the other dragons laugh. _Are you trying to repopulate the Northlands with humans so they can become another nuisance to us?_

I mentally translate this to Hiccup, who only looks at me confusedly. I growl at the Changewings.

I don't want anything to do with you, I snarl, raking my claws aggressively at the sand. _Don't make me._

I look around the scenery, its beauty tarnished by the red-orange beings that plague the landscape with their wishes and wills, their eyes intimidating and borderline intolerable. I see Hiccup nudge me and whisper something, but I don't hear it.

I wouldn't want to anger the Night Furies either, on account of their neutrality, the lead Changewing says. _But if you don't cooperate, I won't have much of a choice._

/We'd like to start by taking your little human for 'interrogation', he hisses.

"Toothless!" Hiccup yells, turning around and slicing at something hard. A loud roar is heard, and in an instant all the dragons close down on me. /Twenty, I think.

"_Nineteen,_" Hiccup mutters, raising his sword shakily and showing the blood at the tip. "Well, for a while."

I blast down a Changewing, raking my claws against the snout of another's as it lunges for me. I smash my snout into something rough, realizing that another Changewing has met its mark at my teeth. The body slumps down limply, cries of pain audible from the dragons.

"Gah!" I hear Hiccup yell. I turn around instantly, whipping my tail at the head Changewing, his fangs biting hard at Hiccup's sword. Instantly, he lashes backward, his mouth bleeding slightly. It's no

wonder why we can digest fish bones so easily. Our gums are incredibly thick.

Don't you- I roar, leaping onto the head Changewing, pinning him to the ground as I snarl in his face. _Ever-_ I rake my claws against his snout, leaving a large gash- _Touch Hiccup._

"Toothless!" Hiccup yells, sheathing his sword (I didn't know he even knew to) and raising his bow defensively. "C'mon!"

I narrow my eyes at the Changewing. He spits a putrid acid at me, causing me to back off, the acid melting a nearby tree. I growl as he lets out an angry screech, blood running from his side where I clawed him.

I hear a loud _thuck_ as an arrow slams into the trunk of a tree. I turn around and see several Changewings with arrows in them, their wounds more or less painful depending on where it hit.

S...stop! one of the Changewings whimpers. I slit my eyes and watch as Hiccup surveys the whimpering dragon. Weak, defenseless, and ready to die.

Yet, Hiccup never makes the move to kill.

I survey the area around me. I see several Changewings groaning dazedly in pain, and even more lying on the ground, some of them motionless. I back off slowly, watching the head Changewing recover itself slowly. Beside me, Hiccup has suffered minimal wounds, though his sword is heavily stained with blood and his left arm is bleeding. Slightly.

Not enough to provoke me to kill anyone.

Go tell your fellow Changewings that I'm not one to tolerate such idiocy, I growl. _I'm here to find my kind. Stay out of my way._

If you're talking about the Isle of Night, he hisses, getting to his feet slowly, _No one's seen that confounded place before. You're searching for a lost cause in a land of war._

I suppose you're a guard, eh? I ask, feeling Hiccup climb onto my back, the smell of blood tickling my senses gently. _I must be hurting your job._

He shoots a spitful of green acid at me, but misses wide as he winces, trying to recover from his wounds.

The Second Brigade will never submit to you, he hisses angrily, letting out a small spit of poison that only hits the ground. _Especially to a dragon slave like you._

Slave? I ask, my nostrils flaring angrily. _What slave?_

Slave to the imbecile human that you so foolishly let onto your back, he growls. _Is he controlling your speech too? Your kind isn't as **submissive**_as_

I send a blast right at the head Changewing, who has to duck to the

side as the rock behind him is incinerated almost instantly. My eyes dilute in anger, my veins burning with the urge to kill. And he's disabled right now. I'm about to jump and kill him when I feel a hand touching my ears.

"Toothless, let's get out of here," Hiccup says, patting my back nervously. I notice that his bow is hanging by his side just in case. "The other dragons are coming to."

I slit my eyes at the Changewing again. Hiccup's right; give him a few more minutes and he might be able to call another pack of nuisances down on me. Instead of slaying the Changewing, I only set fire to his tail, causing him to howl in agony, thrashing his tail back and forth in an attempt to put out what has been marked.

You call me or him anything like that again, I snarl,_ and I'll rip your throat out._

I turn around, pausing only briefly to look at the Changewings strewn about, and spread my wings as I take into the air.

****H****

A slash of a sword. A glint of a silver. A splash of red, warm blood.

Was this what the warriors of Berk did to defend themselves? Sword upon flesh, flesh upon nerves, blood and-

Mikata? Toothless asks, running around me nervously as I watch the sky silently. _Are you okay?_

"No," I say quietly. "I'm not."

What's wrong? he asks, nudging me gently and crooning.

"I killed a dragon," I say in monotone. "I killed a dragon."

I look at the sword, the S engraved in it, and wonder how someone even younger than me had once held this sword, had maybe even slain someone, and maybe even seen the blood splash from the body whose sword found its mark.

Hiccup- he croons with concern. _It was all in self defense-_

"I don't care," I tell him, not taking my eyes off the sword. Did I really hold that weapon? Did I really slash open the flesh of a creature?

Hiccup-

"No, Toothless."

I killed something. I killed someone. I know that I only _hurt_ a lot of them, but there were so many that were justâ€¦ still. Not moving. Not breathing. Dead. Dragon. Those two words don't mix; they're like honey and water, the two substances pushing each other away as they collide. It would take an immense amount of pressure to combine them together.

And here I am, with blood on my hands from all the pressure that I got. From the instincts that flared into me as I took that sword and slashed at the creatures that were only there, and would be somewhere else had I not sliced them down. They would be back with their families. They would be smiling, loving, caring, anything that involved not dying, not facing the fear that even the greatest of Vikings feared: death.

Sometimes, I think it was Toothless who gave me the urge to strike. Sometimes, I think it was my own instincts that wanted me to live which made me attack. It was all a blur of actions, and it never occurred to me once as I hacked my way through.

I wonder why they never killed me. Did the Changewing tell the others to take us in alive? Why didn't Toothless tell me? Why didn't he translate anything for me?

_Hiccup-__

"Leave me alone," I say quietly. "I don't want to talk about anything at the moment."

I didn't mean for him to feel hurt, but he does anyway. He whimpers quietly, pawing the ground nervously, and his ears drooping slowly.

Iâ€¦ I'll be back at the edge if you need me, he mumbles quietly, a sad tone in his normally arrogant, joyful voice.

As he trudges away, I turn my eyes onto him instead. Toothless, who slashed indiscriminately, whose jaws sank into the necks and tails of enemies alike. The dragon who would kill to protect him. Or himself. Sometimes, I don't know who he's fighting for.

But I'm alive. And I've got Toothless to thank for that. But not only for life; for giving me the chance to live. The chance for me to change and the opportunity to create something new.

He killed because he had to. Just like how I had to kill because I had to. Just like how we fish all the time, and don't care about their own little lives as they're being devoured by greater beasts of lower morality, humans, and of even greater beasts of higher morality, dragons.

I was fighting to keep us alive. I trust him that he did the same.

"Toothless," I call out gently.

Instantly, he turns around, his face alight with hope and anticipation. He bounds towards me and raises his ears in curiosity, as if he had reawakened from some spiritual breakthrough and had saw me in a new light. Well, I certainly see him that way. I can't take the image of him killing those dragons out of my mind, but I can certainly fill my mind with his happy face, his endless joy when he's with me. I can't just stay down like this; it only makes the past catch up with us, and it makes the future farther and farther away.

"Say we go for another fish dive, eh?" I ask, smiling as he looks at

me intently.

His eyes instantly widen, his ears flicking upward as if he can't believe what he's hearing.

Really? he asks, all signs of sadness instantly gone.

I nod.

Awesome! he says, jumping up and down (and pretty much shaking the whole rock-island that we're on).

I smile. I'd fight anything, really, to see Toothless smile.

Including my own emotions.

****K****

"How are the lands to the East?" I hiss, watching the messenger with unwavering eyes. Usually, I would take little to no interest in such peasants, but it is a necessary to lower oneself down to such a level to achieve such a communication with others.

"T-the lands are being secured as we speak," the small Changewing says, his voice very much trembling. He should be. "We're just wiping out the last of the Nadders there."

"Nadders," I repeat. "Such a spiteful name. Just the sound wants to make me liquidize something."

I look directly at the messenger, who tries his best to hide his trembling, and there isn't much to say when he's shaking like mad. It's so easy, really, to assume power over others and make them fear just the random threat of yours.

"No, I'm not going to kill you," I almost chuckle, watching the Changewing amusedly. "Dismissed."

No sooner after he rushes out, another messenger flies straight towards me, signs of blood and scorches running along his side.

"Queen Kaeri," the young Guard pants, his wounds threatening to open from his heated breathing. "Your south boundary- the Second Brigade-"

"What is it?" I ask, my boredom threatening to overthrow my power itself.

"A Night Fury- a human-"

"A _what?_" I ask, my eyes opening in alert. "A _Night Fury?_ And a human? I thought we cleared the landmass of such pesky scavengers."

"T-they appear to be together," he mumbles. "They've entered our lands after resistance from us."

My eyes widen immediately. I spit poison at the dragon, but he is not

the intended target. It's his faults that's to blame, not him.

"Why did you attack the Pax?!" I growl. "If he's here, he'll have a special reason. The Pax are not involved in this war. Send an ambassador for them immediately. We will question him this instant."

"But- but- the human-" he stutters.

"If the Pax is offering us tribute," I clarify, "Then this could mean that he has something important for us-"

"He- he-"

"What did I just say?" I hiss, rearing my head back slightly. All Changewings knew it as a sign of attack. And especially in front of the Queen, if you made a run for it, I wouldn't even need to give chase. Either the poison or the guards would kill you.

It's the perfect sign of power.

"Y-yes, your Majesty," he says, flying off towards a portion of the mountain.

I perch at the top of the land, looking at the masses of dragons below me. The War has been a costly series of events, but it's our element of surprise that has succeeded in taking the enemy down with minimum casualties. The Nadders are being pushed back.

A Night Fury is in our lands. I will find him, and he will tell me his excuses. If I hand him back to the other Pax, I may even bring them closer to my kingdom.

This is my lucky day.

* * *

><p>LN: I'm baaack! Well, if Anything for Life's ending counts as being back. Where were you guys? The lack of reception was scary.**

**Anyway, I've been going through a lot of changes recently. The new school here is a really big dis/improvement over the old one- I mean, I'm in a proper U.S. school now! With its moving class to class and free lunches (sort of) and really varying teachers. It's also taking up a lot of my life, which means less writing. I'm going to have to change my 2 day update schedule to something a lot more... untimely. Sorry. = **

Glossary:

Kaeri- Japanese for Change.

I shall see you again either here or Fallen Guardian- whichever comes first. Seeya!

17. Sword

We've settled down on an island higher up North. Hopefully away from

the Changewings. I've been reading more and more about the Northlands. Apparently, the Northlands have been split up between the various dragon species (or, as Toothless constantly says, _tribes_) after the death of the Queen of the Northlands several decades ago. Unlike the Southlands (i.e. Berk and its surroundings) dragons, who have managed to live peacefully (arguably because of the warm area and living conditions that aren't undeniably harsh), the Northland dragons have been fighting each other over control of crucial places: nesting areas, feeding grounds, natural palaces, for example.

I stare at the water as it splashes on with the rock below. It's a nice site for sightseeing, really, but not for thinking. The water is too loud for thoughts, and a lot of the time you'll hear a rock fall into the water below, which makes any thought you get become really depressing. It makes me think of something falling into a bottomless abyss. It makes you feel think of the stone, swimming and sinking in all that water, and I slowly come to relate myself to the stone; I feel like I'm being drowned by my own thoughts, sinking down to the ocean of guilty feelings and painful memories.

I mean, look at the sea. It's eating away at the rocks. It has been for ages. It will continue to erode away at the strong structure, and it's the main reason why there are rocks falling in the first place. They've been eroded bit by bit with the passing time, and, well, it continues to erode. Someday, the water will erode away the biggest of lands, sweeping away Berk and Nord and possibly every other place that exists. Maybe before our time, there were other lands. Other lands that have long been lost to the slow advances of the sea. Who knows how many places are hidden, how many lost civilizations lie, undiscovered, under the waves? How many will ever be discovered at all?

The good thing is, the changes are so slow we'll learn to adapt to it before long. When the first of the eroding becomes noticeable, we'll cover up the lost land with wood, and maybe even then set off for other lands, if there are any left, before the sea swallows us all.

But, hey. All that erosion must carry the rocks and sands somewhere else. It'll pile up somewhere else and that'll be the place where people would live instead. People will build on that rock and live again, only to let the water wash it away again and again in a slow but steady cycle of erosion and change.

There are some changes that come so fast that you don't have time to react, and there are some changes that come so slow that you don't see it coming at all.

I stare at the water as it erodes the rocks, imagining with each trickle of water a tiny piece of rock being carried away with it. Like water, each splash of time takes away with it a life. There are probably people dying all over the world, people dying and crying, lives being claimed, water and fire reclaiming what it had lost. People die all the time. Some people die in their sleep, but some people become subject to a terrible disease and die slowly and painfully, burdening the lives of the people who care for them. The rocks float out to sea, and like the souls, no matter how hard we try to look for what we lost dearly, we can never bring back the rocks that have been washed away. It'll wash ashore somewhere, be reborn into someone in a far away land, but we'll never see it again.

I feel a nudge behind me, and I smile as I hear a warble from the dragon who is only happy to be here. I wonder what has caused our two rocks to wash ashore on the same land. But do rocks ever think of their journey through the sea at all?

You seem to be in a deep session, he croons. _Is something wrong?_

"Nah," I say, reaching backwards and patting him. "Just happy to see you."

Yeah, right, he huffs. _Bet you've been daydreaming again._

"I really should find something for you to do," I say, turning around and patting him happily. "You seem bored."

Why? he asks, tilting his head and crooning.

"You seem to either be sleeping or resting all the time that you're on the ground," I say.

He sticks out his tongue.

So?

"You must be bored," I repeat.

Nah, not really, he says, his eyes avoiding me a bit as he speaks.

I narrow my eyes, and then quickly remember that it's a dragon expression. I stare at him instead.

"You're bored," I repeat accusingly.

Um, no, he says, shifting his paws slightly. _I'm not. Like, seriously. You should get back to whatever you're doing. I'm honestly not bored. I mean, I can just sit here and, uh, sleep or something. I'm totally not bored-_

I roll my eyes. "Yes, you are."

He whimpers slightly, his head bowing down and staring very interestedly at a flower.

Yeah, I sort of am, he mumbles. _But I don't want to disturb you, so, uhâ€¦_

"Why did you nudge me in the first place?" I laugh, rubbing my hand against his snout gently. I pick up the flower and put it on his snout, causing him to look at it curiously.

Well, at ****_first_**** _I thought you weren't busy_, he mutters, his eyes fixed on the yellow flower. _Then you looked really troubled, so I thought it would be best to leave you alone, then-_

"After all that happened?" I ask happily. "Nah. I sort of did become immortal or something, you know."

Fine, fine, he sighs, rolling his eyes. I laugh. The flower slides down his snout. As it falls, he blows it gently, sending it through the air and over the cliff.

None of us say anything for a moment, but I try hard not to smile. I mean, he looks so _innocent_ when he does that-

Shut up, he says with a small warble.

I roll my eyes.

Toothless pushes a log towards me, crooning at it happily.

Cut this into a sword thing, he says. _Or whatever __it is __you humans use to kill each other_.

"Why?" I ask, looking at the log carefully. He actually went and looked for a log _exactly_ the size of a sword for me, but for what?

He grunts in dissatisfaction.

So you can practice, duh, he says.

"...Practice?" I ask, looking at the log (and Toothless) warily. I'm not a big fan of fighting, but after the bowâ€¦

So? he asks, his eyes fixed on the log strangely.

I guess I could give it a try. It's not like I'm going to be able to make a dent in anything with wood anyway. I look at him, and he looks back at me.

"...I'll try," I say, not really sure of what to make of his entranced stare.

Yep, he says. He licks the log experimentally. _Yuck_! he says, sticking out his tongue. _Do__es__ all wood taste like this? It sucks!_

I facepalm myself.

"...You're hungry too, right?" I ask.

Um, yes, he replies.

"Why didn't you say so?!" I ask exasperatedly, bringing up a slice of bread and handing it to him.

Mm- this is excellent- he says, closing his eyes licking the bread blissfully (and disturbingly). _Well, uh, I was sort of waiting for you to fall asleep so I could steal it.. I mean, bread! It's like fish, but sweeter!_

I facepalm myself.

****H****

Within the span of several minutes, I manage to carve a crude wooden sword from the log, not unlike the metallic sword (in fact, I used it

as a model). I strongly doubt that I'll be able to use any weapon of combat, though. There are loads of people who are born to become priests, or diviners, like Gothi. I had always thought that I'd become something like, uh, that. Well, not like Gothi, but someone who was smart but not powerful. Which would explain all the bullying I got, but maybe if I trained myself, I could become better at fighting. Hmm.

Okay, okay. I'm jealous of Toothless and how he's both smart _and_ strong, alright? It's a boy thing.

No, I mean, really. He can protect me and provide me with loads of information, but I can only give him the latter. Plus, I'll only be like a burden to him when danger occurs. It's like I'm useless, in a way.

I think of the village of Berk and grit my teeth. Snotlout must be wooing Astrid by now. And she likes a fighter, you know. She only likes me because of Toothless, who is strong. Me? I can't even lift a sword to save my life. I can only let myself kill when I am not under my will, when my instincts know of only how to fight.

I hate it.

I pick up the bow, feeling its smooth structure in my hand. The wood is neither splintered nor rough, its string tough but bendable. I pick up an arrow, and nock- archery term it gently onto the string of the bow. I touch the thin line of wood gently. I pull the string backwards, feeling the bow bend along with me. I feel a rush of superiority, a familiar feeling that I can only call familiar when I was introduced to this bow, rush from my hands throughout the rest of my body. I feel like I can actually _do_ something, that I can alter the things around me to my favour. I can fire this arrow at anything, and the arrow will mark that fact. I certainly remembered feeling satisfied when the arrows found their marks into the Changewings. I feel wrong about it now, but it felt soâ€¦| _right_ back then.

Did Toothless feel like this too? Does he feel powerful, mighty, manly, like men are supposed to be? I'm a man. I have to become powerful. I can't be weaker than a hot girl like Astrid.

I point the bow towards a tree, and aim for a circular patch in its center. I let go of the string, sending the arrow forward with a powerful gust of bound energy. The arrow flies through the air, ignoring the elements, and lodges itself into the-

"_Toothless?!_" I yell, my eyes widening as I look at the laughing dragon and the bow lodged in the tree's imaginary circle several _inches_ away from him. He apparently had been running here, and nearly ran into the line of fire.

I should feel guilty. But instead, I feel dominant. I feel like I actually control this bow, and I can shoot at whatever I like. Even Toothless had to stop at the last second. With this bow, I can harm others. I could save lives. I can boast to others. I can fight.

Maybe this is what Toothless felt.

Hey, I never thought that you'd shoot that bow, he says with a

warble.

"I guess so," I say, feeling all high and mighty (and acting in that sense). "So, how was your peasantry fishing?"

Oh, it went rather smoothly, your majesty, Toothless replies with a chuckle. His tone has risen to a more royal one. _Has your majesty finally managed to craft a wooden sword yet?_

"Yep," I say happily, pointing towards the sword. "It's right there, fellow peasant."

He walks over to it (with a slightly disgruntled expression, for some reason), and looks at it intently.

Why, this is a fine sword, he warbles. _It will be perfect for training._

I look at him challengingly.

"I need no training," I boast. "I'm strong and independent."

Toothless lets out a sigh.

As you say, your majesty, he says in a gruff manner, but I quickly go up to hug him.

As his eyes roll, I realize I've been going too far.

"But only am I strong with your grace, your honor," I say. I hug him comfortingly. "When does practice start?"

Toothless rolls his eyes and mumbles something like _idiot_, but warbles happily nonetheless.

The training shall start now, your majesty- he begins.

"Don't call me that, your honour," I say with a laugh. "I'm anything but majestic."

As if I had a lot of honor, he says in his normal tone. _Mmph_.

I go and get the sword. As I hold it, I feel a sense of uncertainty as my hands shake slightly with the sword in my hands. I crafted it so it looked almost identical with the S sword, butâ€¦ why does it feel cold?

Alright, Toothless says. _Try swinging it_.

I look at him questioningly.

"Swing it where?" I ask, not understanding his words.

Air? he suggests with an amused warble. My cheeks go red. I feel stupider by the moment.

I grip the sword in my hands, and use that force to swing the sword in a horizontal slash- however, the slash is feeble and I only end up falling from the swing. I land on a scaly snout that pushes me right

back up.

"Thanks," I mumble, which earns me a lick.

Get on with it, he urges. _C'mon_.

I swing the sword again, this time with considerably less force, but I nearly tip over for a second time.

Try focusing your hand on cutting the air, he says. _I don't think trying to use the blunt side to hit the air will help._

I nod, looking at the gripped hilt with concentration. I shift my weight slightly forward, towards my hands. I swing it upwards diagonally, and bring it down with a slam.

Keep going, he says, crooning in amusement as he watches me fail and succeed.

After several more attempts, I manage to find the right amount of force to swing the sword, the right leg positioning to brace my slashes; I can balance power and poise. Even if it does look kind of stupid, just slashing randomly through the air.

It looks hard, Toothless observes as he witnesses me swing the sword vigorously. He raises his own paw up to observe his claws. _Surely I'd be in trouble if I had to hold a sword_.

"Maybe it's because you guys already have that kind of stuff built in," I say, nodding towards his claws. "Which makes you guys really powerful."

Oh, not all dragons have powerful claws, Toothless says, _but__ most of us do_.

"Yeah, yeah," I say. "Because none of the dragons I've met have no claws at all."

Terrors.

"Oh. Yeah."

Apart several more minutes, I finally get the hang of the sword. Well, I don't know any real tactics, but sometimes I pretend that I'm like a professional, slashing through the air and shouting words of courage.

Maybe this is what Toothless feels like. Except for the fact that he roars, but that isn't all that different from a human shout, I guess.

As I continue trying to swing the sword properly, Toothless's eyes begin to close. They'll close once, then quickly open again, as if he had awoken- awoken is present tense from a nightmare, then stare at me with an uninterested look before the process repeats itself all over again.

I stop my practising (if you can call it practising, anyway) and look at Toothless, who is officially asleep. I guess he was pretty bored. I mean, just watching me try to swing a sword (though, admittedly, I

do know how to swing a sword without falling over now, and I can follow up with several more strikes too).

I'm about to wake him up, really, when I get second thoughts on the idea.

Hmmâ€¦|

****T****

Hmmâ€¦| fish. Yum. Tasty. Cod. Mmmm. Slurrrp. Mmmmmm. Delicious. Perfection.

Nothing beats the good 'ol sense of tastiness of fish. Especially fish. Did I forget to say fish? Fish. Synonym for tastiness. Here is a well-defined meaning for the word fish:

FISH - /FEE - /shh

1. (_n._) An aquatic creature sent by the gods (or whatever you petty humans believe in) above. Rich in nutrition and flavor.
2. (_v._) A weird human activity that involves hunting a tasty aquatic creature using a weird string on a stick.
3. (_adj._) To taste really good. Mmm.
4. (_adj._) Excellent, marvelous, aromatic.

Fish is so good, for the matter, that it's going to be my proposal for Stormfly. She'd love it! And remember, I gave my man, (not literally) Hiccup, fish as a sign of friendship. He looooooved it!

Fish. The epitome of joy. Tasty and lovely. A taste for the whole family. Now in a sea near you.

All credits go to The Sea and My Tongue for allowing me to feel something so tasty. Also, I'd like to thank-

"_FUYAAHH!_"

-um, a boy who seems really into the whole sword thing at the moment.

Cue the credits please.

****T (several seconds later)****

My eyes open a fraction of an inch, the greenery (and sky) dominating the little window of viewing that I've given myself. The world looks so small, and the world looks so bright, and here I am, sleepily waking up and trying to wonder what on Earth caused Hiccup to yell like that.

I see Hiccup slashing around wildly, jumping up and down, and screaming random words and phrases.

_What is up with him? I think. _I'm pretty sure bread doesn't do that to you..._

"HIYAA!" he yells, slashing the sword over his head in an arc with one hand. "Take that!"

I furrow my eyes- can my eyes be furrowed?, looking at him with a 'you're-not-serious' look.

He slashes it forcefully in front of him, as if there was a vile enemy who planned to take over the world. "Take this!"

I roll my eyes. Well, the little portion that I let open.

"You think you're so big and mighty, huh?!" he says, extending the sword out at arm's length. He slashes forward violently, jumping forward with each step. "Take this! And this! And this!"

He's not bad, I mumble sleepily to myself. _He could definitely woo a female that way. Females like brave men...__
>

"And this! And this!" he continues, making swift strikes across the side, each strike different from the last. Diagonally downwards, horizontal left, horizontal right. He steps forward with every strike, both of his hands gripping the sword tightly.

And this! And this! I think, wondering if I was ever this playful or _weird_ before. Probably not. My life hasn't been as sociable as his. Definitely not even on the same scale(s).

"Hnnâ€| YAH!" I hear, only to see him fall down and laugh happily. He holds the sword proudly in his hands, imagining it to be something more than just a wooden sword, and laughs as he lies on the ground.

I begin to smile. Hiccup having fun is definitely worth smiling at. I mean, the innocence! And stupidity! But the point is that he doesn't _care_ that he's looking stupid. And we're happiest when we're uncaringly stupid.

Aaaand then Hiccup notices me and my half opened eyes. I swear that his face dropped like an anvil when he noticed me, and began to blush heavily.

Maybe he does sort of care that he looks stupid, I think to myself.

I get up, warbling as I approach his lying-down body happily. A part of him tells me that he's hoping that I didn't see anything, and that I was just half-sleeping. We all hope like that when we get caught doing something that we don't like doing in front of other people.

So, yeah, I saw that.

_That was quite a show that you put __on_, I croon, being the bluntest dragon on Earth. Ever.

Hiccup's face blushes several shades redder/darker/deeper. He turns away from me, only for me to near him even more.

Hey, I'm not kidding, that was really cool, I say truthfully.
Like, supercool.

"Nnnnn," he mumbles, shielding his face away from my snout.

What's there to be embarrassed about? I croon, licking his arm gently. Hiccup squirms away in embarrassment.

"I felt like a two-year old," he mumbles after a while, not making contact with me. "I must have looked silly."

I give him another lick, and he squirms away.

It's not like we have anything to hide from each other, you know, I say, crooning and nudging him up gently.

He struggles, pushing me away from him. "Nnnn."

I nudge him with my snout. After _that_ doesn't work, I decide to approach the back of his head. Like, stay really still behind him and see what happens. Like a silent/bored predator.

I crouch down slowly, being sure to make absolutely no noise at all as he lays on his side, his face pointed away from me and his face covered up in embarrassment. I can hear him mumbling something to himself.

"I was stupid. Oh gods Toothless must think I'm stupid. Maybe he doesn't care. Maybe he's going to make fun of me. Don't worry, I've got Stormfly to counter him. Alright, next time, not in the open, alright? But if I'm not near Toothless, he'll come and look for meâ€|"

I resist the urge to let out a groan.

The only time I've ever felt that embarrassed is when you caught me dreaming about Stormfly, I think to myself, making sure that Hiccup doesn't hear. _That's why I always make sure you're asleep first._

"Hmâ€| yeah. That's it. I won't go crazy like that again.
Hmâ€|"

He slowly removes his hands from his face.

_Wait for it_â€| I think.

"Eh, where's Toothless?"

I move my head reallllllly close to the back of his head and hold my breath.

_Just a little bit more_â€|

Hiccup turns his head around, only to meet a huge pair of green eyes staring right back at him. I huff a blast of hot air into his face.

"YAAAAAH!" he screams. He jumps backwards in surprise, his body surprisingly flexible as he lands on his legs, his chest panting

heavily in shock.

I burst out laughing, my tail thumping the ground happily as I laugh openly. My feet stamp the ground, my mouth letting out several low-pitched warbles.

He glares, though, when he sees me laughing heartily at him.

I keep laughing anyway. I mean, he's just so funny!

"What was that for?" he asks, coming up to me hotly. "You scared me half to death!"

I pull myself together, which is hard, considering

You weren't responding, I warble. I had to do something. Imagine if you were frozen or something!

"I might as well freeze or something," he says roughly, his face going red again. "Geez."

You look waaay better when you're scared, I joke. Maybe I should freak you out more.

"No, thank you," he mutters, getting up slowly. He looks at the wooden sword on the ground, and then he looks at me. With a sincere look.

"You saw me act like that, right?" he asks, hoping that I didn't, you know, see it.

I croon anyway.

I think that looked pretty cool, I say happily. Maybe you'll be a fighter one day.

"You're not helping," he says, his cheeks still incredibly red.

I look at him for a moment. Helping? Hmm.

I think I have an idea, I croon. To help you, that is. And maybe make your cheeks less red.

"Does it involve me getting hurt?" he asks, raising his eyes warily.

I tilt my head.

Quite the contrary, I croon.

****T****

Several minutes later, the wooden-sword-wielding Hiccup and I are standing face to face to each other, his face rather uncertain as I croon happily.

"Are you sure this is going to work?" he asks, looking at me nervously.

Of course, I croon. I narrow my eyes aggressively. Now, pretend

that I'm a Changewing_.

"What-"

I jump at him with full speed, my legs bounding towards him with massive speed. "Hey!"

He jumps away at the last second, his body landing on the ground with a small thud.

"What's that all about?" he asks, scanning my eyes in confusion. I croon.

You should learn how to defend yourself, I say. I look at the sword, now on the ground. _Well, __better_.

"And you're trying to accomplish that by trying to run me over?" he asks confusedly. He puts a hand on my snout as he gets up shakily.

Sort of, I warble, licking him quickly. _Look, when you're in dragon territory, you need to learn how to defend yourself against dragons._

"Um, sure?" he says. "Though I doubt I can save myself if you're not around-"

That's exactly what I'm trying to help you with, I growl. _So if I screw up, you can save yourself and everything_.

"I'd save you-"

Not in this state, you can't, I croon, nudging him away, not wanting to feel sentimental at the moment. It's sort of hard when you're trying your best not to hurt him. _Let's try that again_.

Once we're on opposite sides again, I slit my eyes and try to look aggressive. I mean, it's a dragon trait, but I can't risk roaring because that would attract the Changewings. We shouldn't even be here for too long; we'll have to get going soon.

Alright, pretend I'm an angry dragon, I say, growling softly. Although there's no real need for me to pretend. I am quite irked at Hiccup right now.

"Um. Eek. Help me. Ahh," he says with uncertainty.

I blast the ground in front of him, causing him to jump backwards.

You're supposed to **defend** yourself, I say forcefully. _Not scream like a little girl_.

"It's hard to be afraid of you when you're, you know, _you_" he mutters, only to have another shotblast hit him full on the chest. He buckles backward, but doesn't show any signs of pain (because there wasn't any).

"Alright, alright," he says, holding his stomach experimentally. "I

am very, very scared of you." He tries to look afraid. "Like, I'm totally scared."

I snort. I doubt that he can ever be scared of me.

Now, when I come running at you, I want you to dive away to the side, I say. _Then, when you're on the ground, quickly roll up and gain your footing again_.

"Wait-" he begins, but I dash towards him quickly. His feet are glued to the ground, not knowing what to do.

Move, I think to myself. _I'm not going to make myself hurt you_.

At the last second, just when I'm considering stopping, I run right past him as he jumps away, tumbling to the side, and trying to best to roll over and get up as soon as he can. He does scramble frantically for a/his footing, though, as he rolls.

I stay a good distance away from him as he pushes himself up, his body panting slightly.

"Well, that was eventful," he says.

_Whatever__ it is__ that's going to dash towards you is __probably__ going to have huge teeth_, I say, opening my mouth to show the cavities inside. _You need to get away faster. And get up faster_.

"As in, before they get a chance to strike?" he asks, looking at me weirdly. "I dunno. When you dash towards me, it's like you're going to give me a lick."

Pretend I'm your worst nightmare, I snort. _Try again_.

He nods, this time quite seriously. I run straight toward him, but this time, I leap towards him in an arc, and he jumps away perfectly, getting back onto his feet with a wobble, but quickly regaining his balance nonetheless.

"Hey, I'm getting the hang of it," he says, looking at his hands more confidently than, you know, ten minutes before. "Well, I have to stop feeling so dizzy after rolling, I guess."

You'll get used to it, I snort, running towards him again. He jumps to the right, his prosthetic clanging as he quickly shifts his weight into it and hoists himself up. He looks at me with a goofy face, as if he can't believe that he's actually, you know, learning something that involves physical exertion. Which is almost laughable.

After several more tries, I determine his dodging skills to be better. Well, a bit. I mean, at least he isn't scrambling anymore. He can shift his weight and get up now, which is great.

Still, not enough.

I experimentally fire a shotblast his way, causing him to duck in fear.

"What the?!" he asks, to which I respond by laughing.

_You're not going to duck when you see a Changewing come your way, eh? I snort. _Use your dashing skills!_

"Dashing skills?" he asks.

It's like jumping away, I explain. _But you don't lose your footing. You know, like a sidestep. It's for little projectiles like Nadder spikes. If it's a huge blast of fire, you should jump_.

"What if it's Changewing poison?" he asks.

Whatever suits you, I say.

"Scary dragons?"

I bare my teeth and look aggressive.

"Ok. Make friends with them," he answers.

I laugh. _You're not going to talk any sense into those Changewings, though_.

"Rightâ€¦ then what if it's women?"

I pretend to think thoughtfully for a moment, and then widen my eyes quickly as if I had reached a universal law for fish tastes.

Oh! I know, I warble. _You need to find one first_.

Hiccup glares at me.

"Astrid _does_ like me," he (hopefully) says. "You saw what happened at Halla."

Yeah, _she ****kissed**** you_, I snort. _Big deal_.

He shoots me another look, his face reddening again.

"I don't see any female dragons going for _you_," he says, grinning superiorly.

I slit my eyes. How dare he insult me! The Night Fury, the man, the guy who gets all the girls!

Take that back.

I shoot a bolt of fire at him, but with his newfound skills, he jumps away to the side, and quickly gets up again, a smile permanently plastered onto his face.

Youâ€¦ you just wait, I growl. _Once I find my kind, I'll be getting so many girls you won't even be able to count __them_.

He chuckles. "Yeah, 'cuz there's going to be zero."

I warble. _Oh, you'll see_.

I think for a moment.

Speaking of which, I begin, _You shouldn't only be the defending side. You have to learn to fight, too_.

"Fight?" he asks, looking at me suspiciously. "Fight who?"

Me, I warble.

****H****

I stare at him as if he's mad. His innocent (well, at the moment) expression really doesn't realise the magnitude of his words, right?

I mean, fighting means physical contact. That's alright, but what's not alright is that these contacts are really forceful and often end up in someone getting hurt. Alright, _I'm_ not concerned if Toothless hurts me (well, save if it's about Astrid), but if _he_ gets hurt, especially by me-

Hello? Toothless warbles, nudging me with his snout gently. _You still there_?

"Um, yeah..." I say, snapping back to, you know, where I was exactly 200 seconds ago. And 201 seconds ago. And 202â€¦ you get the idea. "So, uh, Toothless, I wanted to tell you that-"

Get ready, he says, backing away from me a crooning as a warning.

I look at the wooden sword in my hands. Am I really going to strike my friend?

Alright, he croons. _I'm going to fire a shotblast at you. I want to you to jump out of the way, roll, and then strike me with the sword. Alright_?

"Strike?" I ask, mortified at the thought. "I'm not going to strike-"

When you're striking a dragon, he croons, _g__o for the throat. The snouts are usually viable too. Try not to strike the side, because there's a lot of bone there_, he croons, looking at his own side. _Yep. They're pretty macho_.

"Toothless," I plead. "Seriously. I'm not going to fight-"

Roar! Toothless says, pretending to look scary. _Roar. Roar_. _

>

I stare at him.

Croak.

I look at him and try hard not to crack up. Toothless isâ€¦ weird, but so funny!

He looks at me and tries not to laugh either.

Meow? he asks, letting out a very, very, catlike sound.

Ffff-

I burst out laughing, and suddenly Toothless launches a blast right towards me. I double up, flinging myself to the side, clutching the sword tightly as I roll on the ground- towards Toothless, diagonally. The prosthetic leg creaks heavily as I force myself up, grabbing the sword and swinging it forwards-

Toothless's face, passive in the process of training, waiting for the strike to come. It's just a wooden sword, I think to myself. He won't mind.

No.

The sword stops right next to Toothless's neck, my hand shaking with fear and morbid thoughts.

Gently, Toothless shifts his side slightly, and his neck makes contact with the sword. My eyes widen as he croons.

You're supposed to hit the upper part of the neck, Toothless says. _Just over here_-

My mind flashes morbid thoughts of Toothless's head, disconnected from his body, lying on the ground in a bloody mess.

**NO!**

I drop the sword and hug him tightly. Toothless croons gently, his snout rubbing my back gently as I fight the urge to cry. No, I'm not going to cry. I won't.

Hiccup, he soothes. _It's just a wooden sword. And we're just practising_.

"I- I- can't do it," I say, clutching his scales tightly.

It's not the same thing, he says. _You don't want to kill me_.

"That's the point. It isn't the same. I'm never going to be able to do this, even if it _wasn't_ you." Or something along those lines.

"I know, butâ€¦ I can't help but imagine it," I whisper, closing my eyes to stop the tears that are trying to break free. "It's like a nightmare, and when I close my eyes, I see youâ€¦ not alive."

I start crying. I told myself that I wouldn't cry, but here I am, a weakling seeking comfort once again. I am completely exposed mentally, my thoughts pouring out through the small tears that seep down my face as I keep trying to block the thoughts that stab me again and again.

Toothless pulls away from me, and gives me a long lick. His tongue has a familiar stench of smelly fish, which greatly irritates me. I wipe his saliva off my face, and I notice that he's staring at me with an amused expression. I put two and two together.

"You did that to make me wipe my tears, right?" I ask him, a weak grin spreading itself on my face.

You look more macho when you're not crying, Toothless warbles.

Girls might think that boys that think other men are handsome aren't swinging the right way, but like women, we have a judgemental sense of how good-looking people of the same gender are, as so to judge our chances and competition. Or, well, of course, just to tease or help out a friend. seeing how people of the same gender judging how good a painting looks like. You find it nice, but you don't take any real interest in it, and you can help make the art better. It also allows us to see our own art and step up our game.

"Shut up," I smile.

Toothless croons, picking up the wooden sword with his mouth. My mind wanders about Toothless's actions. He didn't mind a single bit when he fired those shotblasts at me, because he knew that I wasn't going to get hurt. He didn't mind at all, really. He just wanted me to become a better person physically. To him, it's almost like he's playing with me.

But when it came to me, I acted overly emotional and stupid.

Well, that was a good first try, he says, breathing a small breath on his feet that makes me think of a sigh. _But if you can't bring yourself to just hit me, then you can just practice_-

"I'll try again," I say quickly.

Toothless looks up at me strangely.

_Did my saliva did something to you? he croons, flicking his tail around in interest.

My head formulates an evil plan. Toothless is _not_ going to be happy.

"It did," I smile. "It made me realize that your stupid snout was the reason why none of the females have ever asked you out, and that your tongue smelled so bad that it scared off all the Night Furies when you were born."

Toothless's eyes dilute threateningly, his mind enlisting several profanities to throw at me. He doesn't even make an effort to block them from my head.

Take that back, he growls.

"And I thought Nadders were vain," I say, ducking as he spits my sword back at me, landing exactly at my feet. He takes up a fighting position, and I do the same.

Use what you learned, he growls, rubbing his feet on the ground challengingly. _It's the only thing that's going to keep you alive_.

"Just what I wanted," I smirk, bringing up the sword defensively as he launches himself at me.

****K****

"Queen Kaeri, the Pax has been spotted," the little Nike informs me. "Sources say that they saw a large blast of fire near the Eastern islands. Our ambassadors are headed there as we speak."

"Good, good," I say, curling my tail in satisfaction. "Let him know where he is. Make sure that he doesn't get hurt. I want him unharmed when he meets me."

"Your Highness, the Pax brings a little human with him," Nike says. "Aka is intent on reminding you of that."

"He does?" I ask, smirking at Aka's little frustrations. "Don't worry. He'll be rewarded for bringing me information of our little Night treasure."

"I don't want to be rude, your Highness," Nike squeaks, "But the human- how-"

I raise a claw to silence her. Only messengers can be this curious.

"It's simple," I say, curling my talons slowly. "He gets to kill the boy once we get our claws on him."

*** * ***

><p>LN: Whew. American schools take up way more time of my life than Thai schools. And the educational system is so weird... but then again, it's a high school. It has to be weird.**

****Credits to Absi B (whether she wants it or not) for correcting several mistakes for me and pointing out the fact that dragons cannot furrow their eyes. :)****

18. Tage

****To clarify, Toothless's dialogue with Hiccup (through their minds/trust) is in *italics*, whereas normal dragon speech is like human speech.****

*** * ***

><p>Alright- now fire at that tree.

I raise my bow, my line of sight aligning with my finger's careful trace across the string. My fingers let go, the arrow flying towards the tree. It buries itself in the bark.

Toothless lets out a satisfied croon as I retrieve it. My hand runs over the sharp blade of the arrows, and then over to the thin lining of the wood.

Hmm, he says. You're pretty good at getting the right mark.

I shake the compliment off, loading the bow again and turning my head towards him.

"What next?"

Hmâ€| _I was thinking of you shooting a live animal, but-_

"No," I say firmly. "I am _not_ killing anything for food."

Toothless lets out a snort.

Really? A viking that can't kill?

"It's because I can't kill for anything that you're here with me," I snap back at him, which shuts him up instantly.

Toothless gives me an annoyed look. It's a look that shows when he knows that he's been cornered- though he never admits defeat, which is something I find really cool about him, his eyes has a way of showing it.

But still, you couldn't pay me to kill. I have no way of ever intentionally killing anything just for the fun of it.

I look back into Toothless's glaring eyes, and quickly turn away in guilt. Toothless's eyes also tell you when he wants you to feel bad, and you can't help but feel bad.

"I'm going to go see how the fish is cooking, alright?"

Toothless gives me a reproachful look, but follows me as I walk anyway.

The silence draws on through the short walk- there is an eerie lack of conversation, a fireless flame that refuses to open and share its thoughts to the only other soul who shares the fire. Thankfully, the fish is enough to convince him to talk.

A lot of the time, I think about eating fried fish, but I never really get myself to roast it, he says slowly.

"Why is that?" I ask, thankful that he's back into conversation.

I dunno, he says, chomping down the fish happily. _I can never burn it properly without completely disintegrating it._

"So much for deadly fire," I joke. Toothless winds his tail around and hits the back of my head.

Shut up, he says with a croon. _Anyway, roasted fish doesn't taste as good as raw fish anyway. Or maybe it's because you're the one who cooked it._

"Ho, ho," I say sarcastically. "I'm the best cook you've got around here. Or would you prefer dicing with Changewing poison?"

I could go and strangle one if you like-

A glare of mine shuts him up again.

We're going to continue on the practice after this, alright? he says. _Then we'll try and get out of this land as soon as we can._

"Can't we get out of this land _first-_" I begin, but Toothless gives me one of his shut-up-and-do-this-my-way-looks.

We're going to make sure that you're not going to get yourself killed if something goes wrong.

"Like what, I insult your overweight body?"

Toothless shoots a blast of fire at me, which I instinctively duck. As I get up, I take a bow and then quickly scoot away from Toothless's incoming tail.

Showoff, I hear him mutter.

****T****

Idiot boy. Thinking that he can say such stupid things! He refused to kill me because _he_ shot me down. _I_ refused to kill him because _he_ saved me.

Stupid idiot. Hmph. He needs to kill to survive. That's just life.

But if he's not going to kill, then that gives me more reason to protect him. I _will_ protect him. I'm teaching him right now!

I'm going to teach you how to 'get down', I warble as Hiccup and I enter a small clearing. _It's important for when stuff's happening above and you're in risk of getting hit by a stray shot._

"Alright," he says, looking at me indifferently. "So, what do I do? Duck?"

Um, I say. How did humans react when they saw dragons again? They usually just ran and screamed in fearâ€¦ Except for a few. _From what I've seen, you have to drop on all fours, then lay down really quickly onto the ground. Keep your hands under your chin, and then spread your feet out on either side. That way, you'll be able to dodge incoming fire and stay unnoticed._

"After I get my camouflauge," he mutters, holding up something green and mucky. "Yuck. I hate moss. I'm not getting this on unless it's completely necessary."

_Alright, try getting down now, _I croon.

He drops on all fours, then quickly lowers himself onto the ground. He brings his hands below his chin, his elbows tucked and his feet spread out on the grass.

"Hey," he says with a giggle.

Yes?

"The grass is tickling my feet."

I roll my eyes.

I never really thought I'd see the day you'd act like someone less than your age, I mumble. Which is ironic, since I'm not sure of my age's consistency with maturity at all.

"Shut up," he smiles, getting up and brushing himself off. "So, that was easy. Now, what do we-"

Astrid! Get down!

Instantly, Hiccup gets flat down on the ground, covering his head with his hands as he shakes violently on the ground with fear.

"Does she see me?" he whispers, hiding his face beneath those hands.

I snort.

You're supposed to put your hands under your head, I mutter.

"What are you doing?!" he hisses. "Get down! She'll see you!"

I doubt it, I mutter, looking around the scenery indifferently.

"What do you mean?" he asks, peeking out of his shelter with a shift of his fingers.

She doesn't like you enough to be flying hundreds of miles up north to kiss you. I roll my eyes at the very thought.

Hiccup gets up slowly, looking around cautiously. As his slow brain finally processes the information, his face turns slowly into a glare.

"You tricked me!"

Well, I needed to see if you knew how to do it, I smirk. _And, according to my personal grading system, you passed._

"Haha," he says sarcastically. "You better watch out for when I catch you off guard."

Not a chance, I say, picking up a piece of cloth and handing it to him.

"What's that?" he asks, looking at it suspiciously.

Your next lesson, I croon.

"Which is?"

Sensing stuff in total darkness.

Hiccup takes the cloth, his eyes trailing at its black fabric from tip to tip.

"Sensing stuff in total darkness?" He gives me a ludicrous

look.

It's a dragon thing, I say. _But I guess humans can learn too._

"Sensing stuff in _total_ darkness?"

Duh. I roll my eyes. _I happen to share a subconsciousness with you, remember?_

He gives me an annoyed look. I stare at him right back with innocent eyes.

Hey, I mean the best.

"Alright, alright," he groans. "But no more practices after this, alright?"

If you do this one well, I say, _Then you're all set for dragons. I mean, you know how to avoid direct combat, engage using long ranged combat, make shelters, hunt-_

"Just get on with the practice," he cuts in annoyedly.

I nod, a small smile embedded in my thoughts as he ties the black fabric over his eye.

****H (A while later)****

Thwack.

Nope. Go to the left.

I go to the left.

Thwack.

A bit more to the left.

"Aw, c'mon, Toothless-"

Left.

Thwack. I flinch in pain.

I said, 'a bit more'.

"How am I supposed to know how much is a bit more?!" I ask. I can feel annoyance tickling my mind now, like an irritation that doesn't seem to be scratchable.

When you stop running into trees, he says. _You have to learn to know they're there, even if you can't see them._

"Can't you just give me a _hint-_"

Well, I said left.

I hit into another tree, my nose colliding with the trunk rather painfully. In my black, black world, I see nothing but darkness, amid

all the light that illuminates my body from the outside. Holding nothing in my hands, I trudge forward slowly towards the sound of Toothless's purposely loud feet.

I swear, you're going to attract every Changewing in the vicinity, the way you're hitting things.

"Shut up," I growl, running into yet another tree. My hands feel the soft bark carefully, making out its rough texture and foundation in the darkness. I try to remember the image of a pine tree, a plant that I had drawn so often, without the ability to look at the pine itself and all its glory. Like all the trees in the area, the pine was thick, tall, and _very_ strong. They served as a simple barrier against most projectiles, including dragon poison and fire, though it will most likely disintegrate after the taking a hit.

Toothless's feet move to the right, but as I turn and lunge forward, my hands come in contact with another tree bark.

"C'mon," I mutter. "Can't we call practice off for a while?"

It's amusing to watch you fail at such simple tasks, is Toothless's reply. _Besides, you're going to need to be able to sense trees and other obstacles when you're venturing through the dark forest-without light._

"Can't you just ignite something?" I ask bitterly, feeling my way blindly past another tree and almost immediately crashing into another. "Your fire would be enough to light the path."

Is that a literal or figurative meaning? he asks, his voice several feet away, where he hides in open daylight, for the boy entrenched in darkness to find.

"Um, both?" I say, wiping a warm, sickly smelling liquid off my face as it begins to flow out of my nose. Oh, no!

Hmph, he mutters. _You don't seem to think like I know all the answers to everything._

"Well, neither do I," I mumble, the quiet flowing gushes of blood distracting my sense of direction. I raise my hand blindly, grabbing onto a tree and leaning onto it for support.

Besides, fire in this area would be suicide. It's like setting up a huge sign saying 'I'm here!'. Which is a terrible idea-

"Uh, Toothless?" I ask, one hand clenching my nose as the blood seems to budge in its cease to flow.

Yes?

"Can I call timeout for a minute?"

No. Why do you ask?

I raise both of my hands in annoyance.

"Can't you see me?!" I yell, a scowl appearing on my blind face. "My nose is bleeding!"

That doesn't seem to mean that-

"Toothless!" I say angrily, wiping a large swathe of my blood off my face. I hear it _splat_ on the tree that I hold on to tightly.

I hear two pairs of feet get up and hustle towards me. Immediately, I feel a snout on my hand, sniffing out the blood that I assessed through my voyage through the trees.

This looks bad, he remarks. _Are humans really this fragile?_

"And you still want me to continue with 'practicing'?!" I say annoyedly, my hand pressed up to my nose.

I hear a sarcastic croon in from my side.

Maybe.

"Toothless. This isn't a time for fooling around. Shut up and please help me."

There's a short silence that strikes between us, a lightning bolt that sends electric shocks through my body as blood continues to flow out of my body. It's a pause that has happened more often over the time that we've been together, and pause that keeps on getting longer and longer with every occasion of its appearance.

I'm going to take you to a pond, alright? he says in a quiet, uncertain voice. _Just hold onto me and I'll lead you there._

Still trapped in darkness, I reach over and request Toothless's neck for support. He moves slightly closer to me, allowing my hand to slip over and my body to lean on him.

"Why can't you just take off these blindfolds?" I ask, dissatisfied at his decision. "I could just run to the pond myself."

I hear a frustrated croon from my side.

I can hear it, he says, _But it's not within eyeshot. You're going to have to follow me on this one._

I continue my walk with him, sarcastic comebacks running through my head, as with Toothless's.

"Then why don't you just take off the blindfolds?" I ask, one of my hands still clamping onto my nose tightly, a soft splurt of blood gushing from my nasal holes every now and then.

Another pause.

Your nosebleed looks bad, is his quiet reply. _I doubt taking it off and assessing the severity will help you get to your destination. Just relax and hold that blood-_

"Toothless-" I begin angrily. I was at my limit. His authoritativeness, his annoying voice. I was bleeding, and he wouldn't even let me take off my blinds. I feel his neck blindly, trying to pry free without falling-

Stop!

I stop abruptly, and I immediately sense what's ahead of me- a thick column protruding from the ground, covered with bark and leaves. Even in total darkness, I can sense that it is there, just by standing in front of it.

...You can sense it, right? Toothless asks quietly, and for once I hear fear in his voice. Fear of my anger- fear that I will hurt myself, fear that his protection will be without my consent, and bring about even more distance in our closeness.

I stand there, in front of a tree that could have well knocked me out.

"...Yes," I admit. "I sense it."

He whimpers quietly, sending a feel of guilt and fear straight down my spine. I can't haveâ€¦ hurt him, right?

I can tell that Toothless has heard that thought, but he only remains silent.

...Do you trust me?

I nod.

I'm using my inner flame to stop your blood from flowing so much, he says. _I've been using yours, too. If you opened your eyes, it would take up a lot of your flame, and it would have made stopping the blood less effective._

I nod.

I'mâ€¦ sorry.

I shake my head.

"I am."

He croons slowly in response.

...Yeah.

I quietly pat his side, and he nudges me back in return.

"Why didn't you tell me in the first place-"

I quickly think back to myself. I imagine myself, several minutes ago, hearing Toothless using my energy to stop my blood from flowing, when all I wanted was for him to shut up.

Toothless lets out an apologetic croon anyway, rubbing his snout on my side.

The pond should be in sight soon. Can you hold the blood?

My right hand, which has been holding the blood for some while, seems to feel less of the sticky

substance.

"Y-yeah."

Sorry.

"Toothless?"

Yes?

"Sorry."

He gives me a mental smile.

Me too.

****T****

I watch Hiccup as he blindly follows me through the forest. After five minutes straight of talkative walking, I have to contend myself to thinking about other random stuff as both of us retreat to our own thoughts. Fish, fire, the Northlands, Stormf- um, interests, Hiccup's training. I think of how much he's changed since entering the Northlands- he's become swifter, more alert, and stronger, but at the same time, he hasn't changed at all. He's still that same boy who can't kill and who has a brain more powerful than the whole Changewing kingdom combined.

Another thing that hasn't changed is how much trouble we're in right now. And how vulnerable we are at the moment.

Even in broad daylight, I am forced to blind him in order for his blood to stop. I don't tell him this, but the blood will be excellent targets for the Changewings, and they will surely be ready to pounce on us once they know of our whereabouts. And then chaos would follow. I've changed islands twice already, and I'm still not sure if we're out of Changewing territory yet. We can't risk flying out, either, as they'd spot us right away and- argh! I hate not being able to fly!

I hate knowing that I'd be outnumbered and suppressed by the sheer amount of Changewings in the vicinity. I hate knowing that I'd be unable to fly through their territory unharmed, and I hate knowing that there are dragons who could overcome me. Not one single Changewing, of course, but a whole pack of them would certainly dent me.

I hate that Hiccup's angry because of me. I hate that I pushed him to the limits and that he can't be better now. I hate thinking that I brought him into a territory he's unprepared for. I hate-

"Toothless? Are you okay?"

I snap back, my train of thoughts coming to an abrupt halt at his words. I try not show my anger through my emotions.

Hmm? I ask, trying to sound as innocent as possible.

"Nothing," he says. "Are we getting close to the pond yet?"

I scan my eyes around. Sure enough, I see it- a body of water, surrounded by trees and greenery, shimmering in broad daylight- only several feet away.

And, just as I do, I see them in the corner of my eye. Large, red, and nearing the island from from all directions.

No! I think to myself angrily. All the supplies are back thereâ€¦| we can't just get bail now. We'd starve without the food. Not only that can't hunt in broad daylight..._

I slightly shift myself to the right, trying to use the shades of the trees to conceal us.

"Toothless?" Hiccup asks. I almost jump at his voice, but I doubt they'll be able to hear him anyway. "Are we near the pond yet?"

Yes, I say, trying to keep my voice calm.

"Good," Hiccup pipes up, still oblivious to the impending threat. "That training really caked me. I need a bath."

Then I won't interfere you, I say, still trying to stay calm. Their sounds grow louder and louder, though I can tell they're doing their best to keep silent.

"Alright," he says with a smile.

Oh, and Hiccup?

"Hmm?"

Can you take off your blindfold for a moment?

"Um, but then- your energy-"

I want you to take off the saddle, I croon. I hear one of them land, somewhere not far away. And the tailfin too. Those need to be washed too._

"Sure," he replies, reaching for the back of his head. The blindfolds come off, and his eyes are present once again. I stare into them for a second, and give him a nudge. He makes quick work of the equipment, slinging them over his shoulder as he finishes. His nosebleed, without the energy to sustain its equilibrium, begins to flow again.

Alright, I croon. Now, put those blindfolds back on. The blood's coming out again._

He nods, tying the blindfold back on his head. I turn him around in the direction of the pond.

Just walk in a straight line from here, alright? When your feet are wet, you can take off your blindfold. You can wash off then._

He smiles.

"Where will I find you once I'm done?"

I hear one of them landing a distance behind us.

You know where to meet me, I say with a smile. _Seeya,
Hiccup._

"Seeya."

As Hiccup walks off, I give myself only one second to see him off.
Turning around, I dash towards the open cliff, waiting for their
arrival.

You'll know where to find me.

****H****

As I let go of Toothless's side, I feel a sense being slowly drained
for me. I feel like the blood in my nose is slowly flowing again, and
my sense of surroundings in this total darkness are
declining.

"Another one of Toothless's tests," I think to myself. "He must be
trying to make me improve my senses again."

I smile to myself. Well, if he wants me to improve, I might as well
go with it. I keep the blinds on. Behind me, I hear a rustle as
Toothless relocates to somewhere else.

"Or stalk Nadders," I think to myself with amusement. They say that
teens are always thinking about girls, and they're not really
inaccurate.

I continue walking in a straight line. True to Toothless's words, I
hear the sound of moving water not long after my expeditions. With
every tree I encounter, I step aside of it, my feet moving blindly,
but vaguely aware through the forest, my arms swinging casually by my
side. I guess it's something that people do once they're used to
being blind. They just walk normally without being paranoid of
running into anything.

Despite the water sounding a bit to the right, I keep on heading in a
straight line. If Toothless wanted me to turn left, he would have
told me.

I stop short of another tree. I move to the right, head forward, move
back left to my original alignment, and keep on walking
onwards.

Someway through the journey, I begin counting the number of trees
that I encounter. 5â€| 6â€| 7â€|

I hear another rustling sound, but I'm too focused on staying on the
path and focusing on sensing my environment to care. I actually think
that I'm getting better at this thing!

8â€| 9â€|

Funny, walking through the forest in a straight line, and only ever
meeting with ever so few trees, despite the forest being full of
them. It's like life, I guess. There are several million people you

could be talking to, loving, or hurting, but in the single line that streaks onward, you only ever talk to so many. You leave your marks on a few, and you run into some so hard that they hurt you. And then you step aside, go around them, and then move on. Or, in Toothless's case, go along with them.

I think about it so much, really, that I don't notice that I'm knee-deep into the water.

Yay! Water! Time to wash all this blood. And Toothless's equipment. I wonder what he's doing right now...

****T****

"It seems like the human we've been hearing of has been disposed."

"Shut up," I growl, glaring at the vast amounts of vermin and filth all circled around me. A little one, who introduces himself as Taje, walks up to confront me.

"It's alright," he says with a small smile. "Humans have never been anything but food, don't you agree? I was personally surprised when I heard the guards talking about you, a Night Fury, with a human."

"What do you want with me?" I growl, stealing a glance backwards. Several hundred kilometers away, Hiccup is washing himself in a pond somewhere. And I am. Surrounded by Changewings.

"Oh, it is nothing, really," he says, sinking himself into a low bow. His neck is a slightly lighter red than the rest of the others. A little crest of loyalty, a small mark, has been painted onto his neck- most likely a messenger dragon. Or vermin. "We merely come to ask you to pay a visit to our righteous Queen, Kaeri."

"I have no business with her," I say, narrowing my eyes at him. "And I suggest you not to try to force any onto me."

"The Queen insists," he says. "That she would like to meet you. She has never conversed with a Night Fury before, and thus-"

"She can come to me if she wants to talk," I growl. "Otherwise, I'm not going to talk to her unless I want to."

"Ah," he says sincerely. "You see, the Queen does not want to be disturbed from her throne. She has many precious treasures to look after, and she has a kingdom to manage."

I snort in disgust.

"So, is that why do you have all this vermin surrounding me? To make sure that even if I try to leave, you'll be able to capture me anyway?"

"For someone as high and mighty as you, we wanted to show our utmost respects," he says. "I personally wanted to meet you, Night Fury-"

"I'm not buying it," I growl. "Stop lying and tell me truth before I

rip your eyes out."

After a moment, Tage's head rises slowly, and he gives me a slightly grim smile.

"Ah, wellâ€¦ it has been reported that you've been reluctant to join us," he says slowly, trying to choose his words carefully. "So we had decided that, if you did not cooperate, we might have to take youâ€¦ by force."

He inclines his head downwards, hiding the little smile that has planted itself on his snout.

"Get away from me," I growl. "You're a disgusting example of a Changewing."

"All Changewings of the Northlands are loyal to the Queen," Tage says slowly. "There are only a few cowards who have decided to leave the benefits of the Northlands for the harshness of the lands below."

"I knew a Changewing before," I growl, "And he didn't need an entire battalion to subdue me."

Tage's eyes twitch, his mind having had enough. As an ambassador, though, he is remarkably fair in keeping his temper. Something that I've never had the ability to train myself to do.

"I do not want to harm you," he says, his tail flicking slightly. The Changewings move in closer towards me, constricting the paths all around. "But if you are not willing to do as Changewing law allows, I will have to resort to hurting you."

My fangs bare, the claws in my feet preparing to slit out. If I'm going to go down, then I'm going to go down in a fight.

"Bring it on."

Tage makes the smallest of sighs. Lowering his head and turning away, he utters a quiet command.

"Immobilize him."

He flicks his tail once again, and at once a poison trail flies out from a mouth of a Changewing. I dodge the poison, blasting the dragon away with a powerful shot.

I duck under the next series of poisonous waves, smashing another Changewing into the ground. I feel the touch of blood as his head collides with a rock. From the corner of my mind, I see another Changewing lunging towards me from behind.

Wheeling around, I lay waste to him with a powerful smash of my snout. He flies off the cliff, but not before emitting a screech of despair.

Suddenly, I feel something looking over me. Several dozens of Changewings fall onto me, their bodies pressing roughly only my wings, snout, and tail, constricting my path of air and vision. Flailing, I shove them off one by one, but their bodies are becoming more heavy, and increasing in alarming intervals. Suddenly, a massive

body smashes into my snout, causing my vision to go out for a moment.

"That's _enough._"

When my eyes open, my feet are held tightly by several Changewings. There's a bleed near my front paw, and my tailfin is tingling with numbness. Thank goodness I gave the other one to Hiccup.

"I regretted ordering your capture," Tage says sadly. "But I am sure that the Queen will forgive me."

"My kind certainly won't," I snarl, struggling under the pressure of my captors. "They'll know about this once I go and tell them." _Once I've found them._

"I had already ordered the stationing of sniper Changewings in all ten islands around this one, and I glad that I didn't need to use them," he says. "Shooting you down would definitely anger her."

"Shut up," I growl, glad that I didn't take off with Hiccup. "What are you going to do with me?"

Tage's eyes twinkle very slightly. He moves towards me, every step of his unable to be countered by my own.

"That's up to the Queen's wish," he says softly. "But for now, the most I can do is to transport you there. Goodnight, Night Fury."

With a blast of blue poison, my mind paralyzes and my eyes black out once again.

* * *

><p>LN: Hooray! The first time I didn't need to use a Japanese dictionary to create a name (because, as you might have noticed by now, I am _horrible_ at thinking of new names). Tage still has Japanese origins, though you can read it as whatever you want.**

19. Fen

The day slowly sets into a cascade of orange. Fiery, red rays strike the Changewings, showing off their capture of the magnificent Night Fury to the lands in their world. Their legs are tightly wrapped around my own legs, disabling me from moving from their flying prison. Among the redness that swarms me, a smaller blob of red continually circles me, barking little messages to the pack of mongrels.

"Five deadâ€¦ the Queen's not going to be happy," Tage mutters. "Not to mention that this is her elite group of forcesâ€¦ ambassadors..."

"Maybe she should have sent someone with less remorse," I mutter. "Idiots like you always make killing dragons so hard."

He shoots me a sinister look, a glare hidden beneath his malice eyes.

"We're born to kill," he says. "The moment we hatch, we're fed fish, and when we grow up, we have to feed fish to our young. We're always killing, always fighting to survive."

"Then why do you care if these dragons-" I gesture towards the dragons holding me captive, "Are killed? If they make your ends complete, why should you feel any value in their lives?"

Tage openly resists the urge to spit poison at me.

"I don't know," he growls. "But I tried so hard not to kill you. The Queen wants to talk to you, not rip you to shreds."

"Possibly both," I mutter. "Besides-"

"Do you even know how high and mighty your tribe is?" he mutters bitterly. "You, Night Fury, the protectors of peace, the fighters of freedom. Hardly any of you have shown up since the War began. It's like you all left everyone to their own devices. No one knows why, and no one has the answers. The few Night Furies that we've managed to capture have never said anything."

"Captured?" I growl, feeling a surge of anger in my veins. "You've captured my kind before?"

"Interrogation is often forced," he replies. "But no one has divulged anything- and we've never tried anything more than just interrogation."

"Why is that?"

Tage looks at me like I'm mad.

"You're the most secretive, most revered tribe the Northlands have ever seen. Your numbers were vastly outnumbered, but yet you have always come out on top. Your attacks are fierce, swift, and they are always deadly. You have been targeting those who disrupt the peace for ages."

I watch silently as he curses himself for saying so many things.

"So we can't be sure of what you're saying. We don't know what's going on in your mind right now. Maybe you'll bring the news back to your tribe after this has happened. But as you are in our custody-"

"You're going to get as much information as you can out of me before you let me go," I say.

There's a tense silence.

"You are not necessarily wrong."

I roll my eyes, watching the sun as it slowly sets. I assess the leverage that I have. If the Night Furies are feared, then I won't be in that much trouble. They're probably already feeling nervous of the results of their actions right now. I can use this fear against them,

make sure that I don't get harmed too much. They don't know that I'm not with the other Furies.

But I can't help but fear for Hiccup. He'll come after me, for sure. I hope I cut off the link between our minds before he could track me down.

I'll never forgive myself if I drag him into this mess.

****H****

I take my time in the water- I haven't been able to clean myself so thoroughly since who knows when. Before we entered the Northlands, I only got a few chances to completely wash myself off, and in the Northlands, Toothless has been disallowing me from entering any body of water (i.e. the oceans), thus making cleaning up after training quite rare.

It'll make you more resistant, Toothless said. _A lot._

Toothless has been a bit quieter lately, now that I think of it. His walks have been less conversational and he tends to show a bit more stress at my jokes. I wonder what's keeping him up? I never asked him before.

With him (and a huge world to explore), there's never really time for conversations to run out. We're always talking about dangers, fights, life, plantations, our past, interests, food, and of course, the debate that happens near meals: who will go find the food?

Still, Toothless. I've seen myself forcing conversations a lot of the time- not with Toothless, though, but I wonder if he's the one forcing himself to talk.

I know friendship revolves around the share of interests, which is why you fall out with someone when you don't have anything in common anymore. But sometimes, your friendship doesn't revolve around things unrelated to you; it sometimes revolves around the 2 friends themselves. You're willing to do things for them, willing to share more personal thoughts and ideas, knowing that they're someone you can trust. However, if one day you feel tired of them, if they're annoying you too much, but you still remain friends with someone just for the sake of them, they're not going to know that you're suffering for them.

With Toothless's and my interconnected minds, am I blind to my hurting of Toothless?

I have to ask him. And if it's real, I'm going to talk it out. I'm not going to hurt him more than I have this morning.

I slowly walk out of the water, carrying the washed saddle and flight mechanism with me. I put on my clothes, shaking the water out of my hair as I slide on the last pieces of tunic onto my body.

"Alright, Toothless, you can come now," I call out loudly. "C'mon, you can come appreciate my beautiful body."

Expecting him to respond with a sarcastic reply, I stand in wait.

"Hey, you're supposed to appear on cue, Toothless," I say, an unsettling nervousness settling in my voice. "You're not supposed to hide and wait for a time to jump on me. You've done that a lot of times today."

With no answer, I try and ask him with my mind. However, the only fire I feel in my head is mine.

I can't reach Toothless.

"Toothless?" I ask, shaking slightly. "Where are you?"

My mind races with thoughts and possibilities- but the idea that stands the most of all is

He's ditched me. I've screwed up and he left.

Shocking as it is, I try and stand my ground. Toothless? Leaving me? No! That's not possible. I'm holding his only ability to fly in my hands!

"Toothless?!"

I turn around, expecting him to jump out at me and calling me an idiot for falling for his tricks.

"Toothless, this isn't funny!"

I begin walking around, trying to calm myself.

Besides, Toothless wouldn't leave meâ€¦ he's above thatâ€¦

I remember the events just before. I pissed Toothless off, I made him frustrated, and I made him feel bad. I was angryâ€¦ but was that the breaking point for Toothless? Did he finally have enough? Was him leading me to the pond a reason to ditch me?

He cut off his thoughts right after you left.

I fumble with the tail mechanism, looking at the metal thoroughly. If he wanted to ditch me, why did he so willingly give up the tailfin?

I scan my eyes hurriedly around the pond. No Toothless. No presence of him in my mind.

Toothless...

"Do you trust me?"

I play his words over and over again in my head. Do I trust him? Of course. He would not leave me without a good reason. Besides, he must be still on this island. His impaired tailfin means that he can't leave the island.

Maybe he's off doing his own thing at the moment. I have my personal time, maybe he has his. Maybe he doesn't want to be bothered. Maybe he doesn't want to talk to me yet.

Maybe, if I wait, he'll come to me. Maybe he's still sorting out his thoughts.

Maybe I should wait. Maybe he'll come to me.

I don't even realize that I've been walking until I slip on a pool of blood.

****T****

As my flight attendants near a large, winding valley, I try hard to hide my fascination of the city, the first dragon-exclusive community I've ever been to (the Queen's den does not count). The place is bustling with activity. Changewings on the ground, tending to their children, challenging others to brawls, young ones playing around, youngsters looking for adventures through the alleys and cracks of the city, out into the woods with their adventures, the older trading and telling stories. They've actually made infrastructure to the valley: little dens and caves, made of stacked rocks that could not have formed naturally.

"Hm, you like the city, huh?" Tage's voice comes from above. "It's been cemented together with the use of Changewing poison- it melts the rocks together perfectly. It has made excellent buildings-"

"I don't want to know of your wonderful enterprises," I growl. "Shut up."

Tage lowers himself down to my level and gives me a wry look.

"I'm sorry," he says in a condescending tone. "Did I offend you?"

"Shut up," I repeat.

"It would be wise to not argue from your position," he says with a grin. "Otherwise-"

I feel a sudden lurch in altitude as the Changewings suddenly drop in altitude, causing me to jolt at the sudden movement. I hiss a profanity at Tage, who smiles at me back.

"Ah, not aware of your situation yet?"

Immediately afterwards, I feel a pain in my left front leg as the Changewing constricts it tightly. I glare at Tage, trying to ignore the pain in my leg.

"Though I may not harm you, I can certainly show you that talking to the Queen will certainly mean that you cannot be this cocky," he says. "She is not a fan of tolerating boldness."

I'm about to hiss another profanity at him, but a strong constriction on my left front leg forces me to shut up. I swear softly in my mind instead; there's no way they're going to be able to truly shut me up. If they knew what they had in store for themâ€¦ if they knew what Hiccup would do-

I lurch myself out of the thought. No. He's not coming after me. I'm going to break out of this mess myself and I'm going to return to

him.

My train of thought continues for I feel my constricts loosen as I'm dropped onto a raised platform, fairly far from the ground below. Here, a place of high altitude, considerably fewer dragons are exhibiting their lives, and the attention that I'm getting is far less than what I'd get if I was walked through the valley. I can feel the news spreading below, though; a Night Fury in custody of the Changewings. Against his will.

Ahead of me, the palace is in sight. Though built from the same materials as the buildings below, the palace is larger than any structure I have ever seen. Comprised of several, high stories and constant paths branching off towards other parts of the mountains, its activity almost rivals the activity of the dragons below.

"You will be closely monitored as you enter the palace," Tage explains to me. I feel the Changewings holding on to me take off. "Any attempts to escape will be futile, so I suggest you to not try anything of sorts."

I roll my eyes slightly, walking forward slowly. The main entrance of the palace seems to be where I'm walking, a long path that leads directly to the Waiting Room of the palace.

As I hear Tage take flight, I feel a slight twinge of loneliness, even though I hate Tage. I'm so used to companionship nowâ€¦ even enemies make me feel more relaxed than being alone.

No. I mustn't think like that.

I take the long walk to assess my situation.

„Alrightâ€¦ I'm in trouble,“ I think to myself. „I'm without the flight mechanism. I can't leave here without it. I wish Hiccup was here. He'd know what to do-“

I hit myself with my tail to shut myself up. My snout ends up bleeding slightly because of the jagged end of my tail, but it's enough to sober me up.

„I'm a Night Fury,“ I growl to myself. „I'm more than capable of thinking this one out on my own. I got myself into this mess. I'm going to get out of it myself.“

Looming in front of me, the grand palace of the Changewings. Inside there somewhere, is both the problem and the key to my problems. I have no idea what lies inside, but I know that I'll be prepared for it- because I know that I'm not alone in this struggle.

I smirk. The Queen is going to have to contend with my cockiness.

****H****

"Holy s- This is blood!"

Toothless's name is the second thought that jumps to my head. Around this cliff that I find myself on, I see several bodies of dead Changewings sprawled about, their insidesâ€¦ ugh, their bodies in

various severity of death. Immediately, I turn around, gripping a tree for support. The smell, however, is overwhelming- no sooner do I walk into the smell, must I immediately turn away from the pure putridness of the smell.

The smell is so strong, in fact, that I throw up as soon as I exit the vicinity. Panting heavily, I force myself to stay upright, clutching the tree for support.

"Manâ€¦ dead dragons..."

One of the things about Berk is that it's so new to dragons that we haven't seen any die yet. The horrible truth is, of course, that dragons will die, regardless of what bond people have made with them. They've been dying for ages, of course, with what Berk trying to genocide them all, but there wasn't a lot of affection for the dragons back then. Now, with the dragons our friends, and Changewings- well, they can be good. They've never been evil to us, even if they don't prefer Berk as their home.

But even evil ones don't deserve to die.

"Whoâ€¦ did this?"

I turn back slowly, the feelings of disgust and unbearability fading slowly to a dim. It was still there, being in the presence of blood and death, but it was certainly less. It was less enough to be able to actually inspect the wreck of bodies.

The Changewings seem to have died very recently. In fact, a few of their organs are still working, despite their hearts not. But they're all dead. About three in all, with their reasons of death different.

I grunt at the pools of blood lying near their bodies. The person who did this mustn't have had a lot of mercy with dragons.

Wait, person?

My eyes fly around, my mind wandering at the possibility of there being another human in the midst. Another name jumps out of my mouth immediately-

"Sena?"

My eyes continue to flit around, half-hoping that whoever did this was Sena, or at least someone who I could trust. If there was a fanatic running aroundâ€¦

"Sena? Where are you?"

I wait for those dark eyes to appear from the trees, but the smell of blood is the only thing that registers. Nothing- no one.

After a few more minutes of waiting, I give up my hopes in finding Sena. A part of me is relieved, too- for him to enter this crazy, barren, war-torn land is suicide.

A small mark on one of the Changewings catch my eye- several parallel lines, the center wider than the tips, scratches at the end of tail.

I look at the other dragons, and they too have similar marks, scratched forcefully into their flesh.

"Mating marks? Hmm..."

It was usually the males that mark the female- not the other way around.

"Or..."

My mind lurches back to when the Changewings first attacked us- when my sword flew left and right, slashing as I could to keep me and Toothless alive. I left a gaping mark, a sword mark into the dragons. Some of them are large, fatal wounds, but others are more scratch-like. They're...

And then it hits me.

"Toothless?!"

****T****

"These Changewings have a massive obsession with red... and they're not even red."

The palace's interior is covered with elaborate rubies; the whole inside glows with a sickly red that vaguely reminds me of blood. There is nothing to be seen this rich from the outside, which is only stone and mud. The waiting room branches off into three more rooms, each of them too covered in rubies. I've heard that dragons are fans of treasure, but this much, all hidden in this palaceâ€¦

"Ah! There you are!"

I take my eyes off a strange-looking statue and turn towards the source of the sound. A short Changewing, the impression of a midget dragon, walks towards me.

"Hi! My name's Fen," she pipes up. "Are you coming to see the Queen?"

I take in her physique; her skin is lighter than red, yet not exactly pink, like her Dragonese name would suggest. She looks like one of those care-free little kids that are clueless about the world beyond the housing's walls.

"C'mon!" She says, kneeling down slightly and looking at me curiously. "What's up? Why are you here?"

"Iâ€¦ uh, I'm here to see the Queen," I say, slightly caught off guard by the dragonet's livelihood. It would be hard to expect her attitude in such a place.

"You're here to Mother!" she says, jumping up and down in delight. "It's the path right in front of you. You'll meet several more intersections, but keep going on forward."

I look at her, wondering slightly if she's implying anything by that.

"Thanks," I say.

"No problem! But you have to promise me something..." she says, her paws covering her snout in that excitement feeling. She lowers her voice and beckons me close to her. After a brief moment of wariness, I end up edging towards her close enough for her to whisper to me.

"You can't tell anyone that you've seen me," she whispers. "I'm not supposed to be outside. But Mother said that she'd be expecting to meet a Night Fury. I asked her if they were handsome like the princes I've read of, but she shooed me off, so I came to see you for myself."

A short silence passes.

"Uh...?" I ask nervously. Being the vain dragon I am, my eyes raise slightly, waiting for her opinion.

"You look great!" she says, jumping up and down again. "Reminds me of my brother."

"Your brother?" I ask, my relief quickly turning into curiosity.

"Tage," she says. "But, of course, you don't know him."

"Tage...?" I ask, my eyes slit briefly, but quickly clear up to not intrigue her. "...I've never heard of him."

"Oh, you'll meet him," she says. "Mother says dragons are falling for him left and right. I'm pretty sure he takes his extra time trying to make himself look good, though. He's trying really hard to impress the girls in the palace. He's scared they don't like him...enough."

She giggles wildly, as if she just let out a huge gossip.

"But please don't tell anyone that," she says, still grinning. "He takes it as a very sensitive subject."

"I won't," I say, trying hard not to smile. "I have a friend who's crazy about getting girls, too."

She giggles again, but this time with a glint of her eye, a beaming face. I recognize it easily; the sign that you've been put into their trust zone, or at least the person-who's-fun-to-be-with zone.

"I have to be back in my room now," she says hurriedly. "Promise me that you won't tell?"

I nod. She quickly flies through the left path, but then turns back.

"I forgot to ask you something," she says. "What's your name?"

I take a moment to consider.

"It's... Pax," I say. "Pax."

"Ooh," she says in awe. "That's a cool name! I wish I had a cool name like that. Instead, I'm stuck with this stupid, girly, _Fen_."

"It's not a bad name," I say reassuringly.

"Thanks," she says with a smile. "I really have to dash now. Hope to see you again!"

She turns around and flies away. My eyes trail her as she does.

"Seeâ€| you," I say, trying to reassess myself.

So there are dragons like this, too, I think to myself. Happy, careless dragons that aren't focused on killing. I wonder if she even knows how to hunt.

I wonder if she even knows what position I'm in. It wouldn't matter for her, I guess. To everyone, I'm a prisoner. To her, I'm just another dragon she can play with.

It's this kind of innocence that so easily gets you into trouble. It's an innocence that relies on impure people to protect you from the horrors of the world.

I shake my head, the wariness slowly coming back to me as I raise my gaze to the paths in front of me.

"Keep yourself togetherâ€| Hiccup," I mutter to myself, heading forward into the palace.

****H****

"Toothlessâ€| did this?" I ask myself for the fifth time. "Thenâ€| where is he?"

My feet carry me past the bodies of the Changewings, holding my breath as I near the disintegrating bodies. With this new idea, more evidence of Toothless crops up everywhere. Burns on the ground that I passed off as dirt disturbances, the sharp fang marks that bit at the sides, the slashes that could not have come from anyone else.

"Toothless..."

Was there a fight?

I look at the dead bodies again. There is far more disturbance in the ground than there are dragons, which means that they must have must have fought a lot.

"Toothless?"

Where is he now? He can't fly away without the mechanism. Has he been thrown off the cliff?

My mind spins dangerously, and I stagger myself slowly towards the cliff. My head spins slightly as I peer down, trying hard not to fall off.

Below, is a body of another Changewing, smashed across the rocks. Amidst the blood that spills violently across the rock, the texture is painted with his organs-

All of a sudden, I lurch my head back and throw up again, this time by the cliff. It takes me several moments to recover, backing away from the cliff slowly.

"He killed these dragons..." I say, panting slowly as I try to regain my composure. "But whereâ€¦ is he?"

If he's not here, then he'd at least warn me, tell me to pack up and leaveâ€¦ he wouldn't be that mad at me, right?

"Toothless?"

How come I heard nothing of the struggle? Why weren't there any roars, especially from Toothless? Changewings don't have a loud roar, but Toothlessâ€¦ his roar scared me so much that I fainted once. And yet, I heard nothing from this fight.

Has he been kidnapped?

****T****

My walking eventually carries me to a large hall, prompted with guards that align both sides. A large throne lies at the end of the hall, a large Changewing standing upright in it, looking forwards with a happy expression.

"Soâ€¦ you are here, Night Fury," she says slowly, taking in my body in her eyes. "has the reception committee been good to you?"

My mouth wants to tell on her that her son has been violating conducts of interrogation, but my mind, remembering Fen's bright and happy attitude, forces myself to clamp my mouth and nod silently.

"Excellent," she says. "Tage has always been a peaceful dragon. He will grow up to be a good king."

_You should relocate him to the interrogating-torturing department, I think to myself.

"Nowâ€¦ Night Fury," she says, her eyes glinting with excitement. "You are the fifth of your kind I have ever met. I can safely assume that you know as much as the people before you. But, then again, you knew that this was coming, no? Maybe you even know that it has been laid out in the stars that you'd come under our protection."

"Iâ€¦ of course," I lie, confused at her words.

"You Night Furies," she says with a flick of her tail. "You are the all-knowers of the Northlands. I know for a fact that you are able to foretell the futureâ€¦ am I right?"

"Y-yes," I say, alarmed at her words. _Night Furies can foretell the future? Then why can't I?_

"I believe that you know why you have been asked here," she says,

moving in her throne to get into a more comfortable position.

No, I don't, I think to myself, but I only nod to her.

"I would love to ask you now, of course, how the War will turn out," she says, "But from my experience with the other Furies, I believe that your instincts do not come by will. Your foretelling needs time; and time will be provided for you. After you have told me the future, you are free to go. Until then, you are free to ask for whatever you want."

Experience with other Furies? There really are more of me?

I am tempted to ask what happened to the other Furies, but it would betray my knowledge of the other Night Furies. Instead, I keep my snout shut.

"But first, I must know your name first," she says. "Surely, like me, you must have one."

"I..." I say, staring into her cold, red eyes. It is evident that she does not share the fear of Night Furies that others do, though she does show respect to an extent. "...It's Pax."

"Pax," she says musedly. "Peace. Is that a hint to my future? A sign that my kingdom will have peace?"

My ears straighten nervously, not knowing what to answer.

"I'm just joking," she says with a chuckle. "Now, I must kindly ask you not to leave the kingdom until I have got what I have asked for. In return, I will protect you from the other tribes that will surely try to gain possession with you."

Possession? Do the other tribes want to find me as well?

"Nowâ€¦ allow my subject here to escort you to your quarters," she says, motioning to a small Changewing to lead my way. "We hope you enjoy your stay here."

I look at her, and then at the large palace, and then at myself.

This just got a lot more complicated, I think to myself. _I'm going to need to find out a lot more about my kind._

"Thank you," I say, and follow the small Changewing as he walks forward.

End
file.